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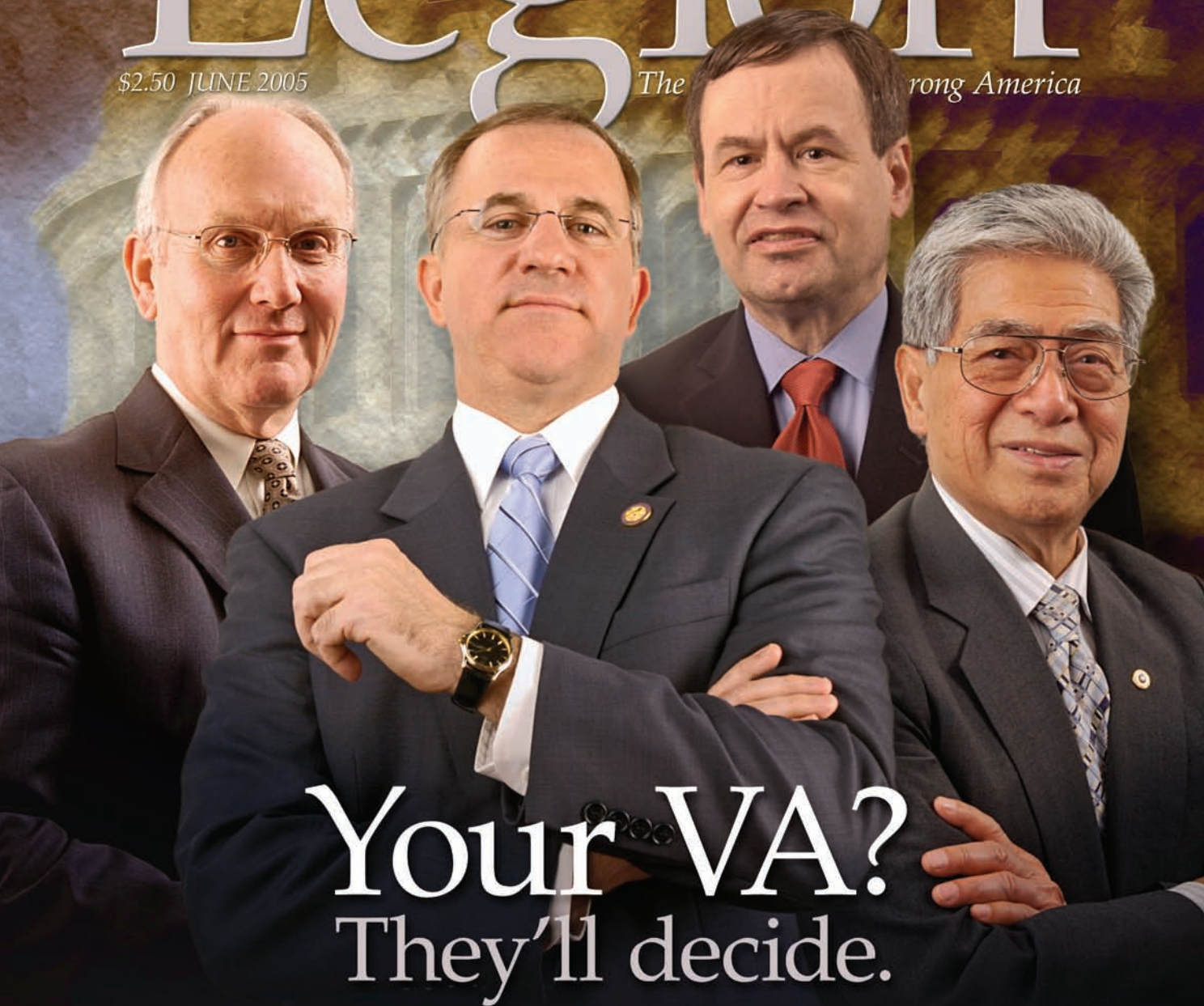
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Legion

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Photo illustration:
John Harrington
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The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2.7 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 15,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.



'They went into Iraq to bind up her wounds, move her to a place of safety and restore her to health.'



12

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700 N. Pennsylvania St.
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<http://www.legion.org>

National Commander **Thomas P. Cadmus**

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Editor **John Raughter**

Operations Administrator **Patricia Marschand**

EDITORIAL

Managing Editor **Jeff Stoffer**

Editorial Administrator **Brandy Ballenger**

Senior Editor **Steve Brooks**

Assistant Editor **James V. Carroll**

Assistant Editor **Matt Grills**

Assistant Editor **Elissa Kaupisch**

Contributing Editor **Alan Dowd**

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Art Director **Holly K. Soria**

Designer **Doug Rollison**

PRODUCTION

Production Director **Jon Reynolds**

Designer **King Dooxsee**

ADVERTISING

Advertising Director **Diane Andretti**

Advertising Assistant **Sara Palmer**

Advertising Assistant **Robin Bowman**

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'A shot at modernity'

Another great cover on the magazine for April. Whether it's the troopers with their boots in the dust or us here in the states working on some project to support them, or any of the people in the chain in between, I think we really can be proud of what is being accomplished. A lot of times, when we're in the trenches wrestling with some difficult situation and the cavalry is just not coming to help, it's easy to get discouraged. But that intent little girl on the cover should make our month. Giving her a shot at modernity makes it all worth it.

— Phil Volker, Vashon, Wash.

Congratulations to the photographer who, for the April cover, snapped the picture of the little Afghan girl poised to write with her pencil. The photo poignantly captures the universal eagerness of children to learn and goes a long way toward showing why we are in Afghanistan.

— Ivan Melada, Albuquerque, N.M.

I have read in numerous periodicals, including *The Washington Post*, that the most significant development to occur since the end of the war in Afghanistan has been the resurgence of the opium trade. This has been a boon not only for America's thousands of potheads but for the Afghan economy as well. The long-term impact on Afghanistan in all aspects is much more in doubt and much more problematic. Your failure to report on this issue or even mention it is shoddy and incomplete reporting.

— Donald S. Connors, Arlington, Va.

Flat income tax

The flat income tax is another scam perpetuated to shift more and more of the tax burden on the middle working class (Big Issues, April). The complexity of today's taxes is not the result of calculating your tax based on your taxable income; it is the

result of calculating your taxable income due to the profusion of deductions, ancillary forms and tables, sources of income and how each is handled, etc. — much of it introduced to benefit specific constituencies. Bruce Bartlett's proposal eliminates all deductions the working class might take — mortgage, charity, medical, etc. — but increases them for the monied class. No taxes on interest income, dividends or capital gains. This is a continuation of the shift in taxes from investment income to labor income. If enacted at a lower rate, next up might be a national sales tax. Bartlett avoids any estimate of what the flat tax rate would be. Previous proposals estimated in the range of 20 percent to 30 percent, down from 38 percent at the high end and up from 10 percent on the low end. The proposal to reduce the tax form to postcard size is not affected by elimination of a graduated rate — this can be a single line on the return generated from a simple table (e.g., your income is "this amount," you pay "this percent") — but would be by the elimination of all deductions and taxing all income without exceptions.

— Robert Homiak,
Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

I continue to be amazed at the whining and sniveling from those who voted for the losing presidential candidate. I was interested in a good honest debate about income tax. I have heard about the flat income tax and truly wanted more information. But what did I see from Max B. Sawicky? A blast at Bush that had absolutely no relevance to the topic at hand. People like Sawicky just can't seem to move on.

— Mark Swan, Colorado Springs, Colo.

The debate on whether income tax should be flat or graduated omits a third possibility: no tax at all. A constitutional amendment authorizing the mint to print whatever money the federal government needs would make federal taxes unnecessary. Economists say this could cause inflation, but that could be avoided by a judicious system of state and local taxes designed to prevent excess money accumulation and give state and local governments what they need to get things done right. Abraham Lincoln used this method to pay off Civil War debt.

— Kenneth J. Epstein, Chicago

I had just completed my federal tax forms for the 56th year when I received the April issue. I read the discussion about the flat tax and found it an opportune time to refigure my taxes using the flat tax suggested. My wife and I live on a modest pension plus Social Security. The flat tax suggested would more than double our taxes and would considerably alter our lifestyle. The rich would become much richer and the poor much poorer.

— Guy Gowen, Rossville, Ga.

A veteran is a veteran

I served in the 11th Heavy Bomb Wing during the 1960s

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BRIEF SUMMARY Before prescribing NEXIUM, please see full Prescribing Information. **INDICATIONS AND USAGE** NEXIUM is indicated for the short-term treatment (4 to 8 weeks) in the healing and symptomatic resolution of diagnostically confirmed erosive esophagitis; the maintenance of symptom resolution and healing of erosive esophagitis (controlled studies do not extend beyond 6 months); and for the treatment of heartburn and other symptoms associated with GERD; and for risk reduction of NSAID-associated gastric ulcer. **CONTRAINDICATIONS** NEXIUM is contraindicated in patients with known hypersensitivity to any component of the formulation or to substituted benzimidazoles. **PRECAUTIONS** Symptomatic response to therapy with NEXIUM does not preclude the presence of gastric malignancy. Atrophic gastritis has been noted occasionally in gastric corpus biopsies from patients treated long-term with omeprazole, of which NEXIUM is an enantiomer. **Information for Patients** NEXIUM Delayed-Release Capsules should be swallowed whole and taken at least one hour before meals. For patients who have difficulty swallowing capsules, one tablespoon of applesauce can be added to an empty bowl and the NEXIUM Delayed-Release Capsule can be opened, and the pellets carefully emptied onto the applesauce. The pellets should be mixed with the applesauce and then swallowed immediately. The applesauce used should not be hot and should be soft enough to be swallowed without chewing. The pellets should not be chewed or crushed. The pellet/applesauce mixture should not be stored for future use. Antacids may be used while taking NEXIUM. **Drug Interactions** Esomeprazole is extensively metabolized in the liver by CYP2C19 and CYP3A4. *In vitro* and *in vivo* studies have shown that esomeprazole is not likely to inhibit CYPs 1A2, 2A6, 2C9, 2D6, 2E1 and 3A4. No clinically relevant interactions with drugs metabolized by these CYP enzymes would be expected. Drug interaction studies have shown that esomeprazole does not have any clinically significant interactions with phenytoin, warfarin, quinidine, clarithromycin or amoxicillin. Post-marketing reports of changes in prothrombin measures have been received among patients on concomitant warfarin and esomeprazole therapy. Increases in INR and prothrombin time may lead to abnormal bleeding and even death. Patients treated with proton pump inhibitors and warfarin concomitantly may need to be monitored for increases in INR and prothrombin time. Esomeprazole may potentially interfere with CYP2C19, the major esomeprazole metabolizing enzyme. Coadministration of esomeprazole 30 mg and diazepam, a CYP2C19 substrate, resulted in a 45% decrease in clearance of diazepam. Increased plasma levels of diazepam were observed 12 hours after dosing and onwards. However, at that time, the plasma levels of diazepam were below the therapeutic interval, and thus this interaction is unlikely to be of clinical relevance. Coadministration of oral contraceptives, diazepam, phenytoin, or quinidine did not seem to change the pharmacokinetic profile of esomeprazole. Studies evaluating concomitant administration of esomeprazole and either naproxen (non-selective NSAID) or rofecoxib (COX-2 selective NSAID) did not identify any clinically relevant changes in the pharmacokinetic profiles of esomeprazole or these NSAIDs. Esomeprazole inhibits gastric acid secretion. Therefore, esomeprazole may interfere with the absorption of drugs where gastric pH is an important determinant of bioavailability (eg, ketoconazole, iron salts and digoxin). **Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility** The carcinogenic potential of esomeprazole was assessed using omeprazole studies. In two 24-month oral carcinogenicity studies in rats, omeprazole at daily doses of 1.7, 3.4, 13.8, 44.0 and 140.8 mg/kg/day (about 0.7 to 57 times the human dose of 20 mg/kg/day expressed on a body surface area basis) produced gastric ECL cell carcinoids in a dose-related manner in both male and female rats; the incidence of this effect was markedly higher in female rats, which had higher blood levels of omeprazole. Gastric carcinoids seldom occur in the untreated rat. In addition, ECL cell hyperplasia was present in all treated groups of both sexes. In one of these studies, female rats were treated with 13.8 mg omeprazole/kg/day (about 5.6 times the human dose on a body surface area basis) for 1 year, then followed for an additional year without the drug. No carcinoids were seen in these rats. An increased incidence of treatment-related ECL cell hyperplasia was observed at the end of 1 year (94% treated vs 10% controls). By the second year the difference between treated and control rats was much smaller (46% vs 26%) but still showed more hyperplasia in the treated group. Gastric adenocarcinoma was seen in one rat (2%). No similar tumor was seen in male or female rats treated for 2 years. For this strain of rat no similar tumor has been noted historically, but a finding involving only one tumor is difficult to interpret. A 78-week mouse carcinogenicity study of omeprazole did not show increased tumor occurrence, but the study was not conclusive. Esomeprazole was negative in the Ames mutation test, in the *in vivo* rat bone marrow cell chromosome aberration test, and the *in vivo* mouse micronucleus test. Esomeprazole, however, was positive in the *in vitro* human lymphocyte chromosome aberration test. Omeprazole was positive in the *in vitro* human lymphocyte chromosome aberration test, the *in vivo* mouse bone marrow cell chromosome aberration test, and the *in vivo* mouse micronucleus test. The potential effects of esomeprazole on fertility and reproductive performance were assessed using omeprazole studies. Omeprazole at oral doses up to 138 mg/kg/day in rats (about 56 times the human dose on a body surface area basis) was found to have no effect on reproductive performance of parental animals. **Pregnancy Teratogenic Effects.** **Pregnancy Category B** Teratology studies have been performed in rats at oral doses up to 280 mg/kg/day (about 57 times the human dose on a body surface area basis) and in rabbits at oral doses up to 86 mg/kg/day (about 35 times the human dose on a body surface area basis) and have revealed no evidence of impaired fertility or harm to the fetus due to esomeprazole. There are, however, no adequate and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. Because animal reproduction studies are not always predictive of human response, this drug should be used during pregnancy only if clearly needed. Teratology studies conducted with omeprazole in rats at oral doses up to 138 mg/kg/day (about 56 times the human dose on a body surface area basis) and in rabbits at doses up to 86 mg/kg/day (about 56 times the human dose on a body surface area basis) did not disclose any evidence for a teratogenic potential of omeprazole. In rabbits, omeprazole in a dose range of 6.9 to 69.1 mg/kg/day (about 5.5 to 56 times the human dose on a body surface area basis) produced dose-related increases in embryo-letality, fetal resorptions, and pregnancy disruptions. In rats, dose-related embryo/fetal toxicity and postnatal developmental toxicity were observed in offspring resulting from parents treated with omeprazole at 13.8 to 138.0 mg/kg/day (about 5.6 to 56 times the human doses on a body surface area basis). There are no adequate and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. Sporadic reports have been received of congenital abnormalities occurring in infants born to women who have received omeprazole during pregnancy. **Nursing Mothers** The excretion of esomeprazole in milk has not been studied. However, omeprazole concentrations have been measured in breast milk of a woman following oral administration of 20 mg. Because esomeprazole is likely to be excreted in human milk, because of the potential for serious adverse reactions in nursing infants from esomeprazole, and because of the potential for tumorigenicity shown for omeprazole in rat carcinogenicity studies, a decision should be made whether to discontinue nursing or to discontinue the drug, taking into account the importance of the drug to the mother. **Pediatric Use** Safety and effectiveness in pediatric patients have not been established. **Geriatric Use** Of the total number of patients who received NEXIUM in clinical trials, 1459 were 65 to 74 years of age and 354 patients were 75 years of age. **ADVERSE REACTIONS** The safety of NEXIUM was evaluated in over 15,000 patients (aged 18-84 years) in clinical trials worldwide including over 8,500 patients in the United States and over 6,500 patients in Europe and Canada. Over 2,900 patients were treated in long-term studies for up to 6-12 months. In general, NEXIUM was well tolerated in both short- and long-term clinical trials. The safety in the treatment of healing of erosive esophagitis was assessed in four randomized comparative clinical trials, which included 1,240 patients on NEXIUM 20 mg, 2,434 patients on NEXIUM 40 mg, and 3,008 patients on omeprazole 20 mg daily. The most frequently occurring adverse events (1%) in all three groups was headache (5.5, 5.0, and 3.8, respectively) and diarrhea (no difference among the three groups). Nausea, flatulence, abdominal pain, constipation, and dry mouth occurred at similar rates among patients taking NEXIUM or omeprazole. Additional adverse events that were reported as possibly or probably related to NEXIUM with an incidence <1% are listed below by body system: **Body as a Whole:** abdomen enlarged, allergic reaction, asthenia, back pain, chest pain, chest pain substernal, facial edema, peripheral edema, hot flushes, fatigue, fever, flu-like disorder, generalized edema, leg edema, malaise, pain, rigors; **Cardiovascular:** flushing, hypertension, tachycardia; **Endocrine:** goiter; **Gastrointestinal:** bowel irregularity, constipation aggravated, dyspepsia, dysphagia, dysplasia GI, epigastric pain, eructation, esophageal disorder, frequent stools, gastroenteritis, GI hemorrhage, GI symptoms not otherwise specified, hiccup, melena, mouth disorder, pharynx disorder, rectal disorder, serum gastrin increased, tongue disorder, tongue edema, ulcerative stomatitis, vomiting; **Hearing:** earache, tinnitus; **Hematologic:** anemia, anemia hypochromic, cervical lymphadenopathy, epistaxis, leukocytosis, leukopenia, thrombocytopenia; **Hepatic:** bilirubinemia, hepatic function abnormal, SGOT increased, SGPT increased; **Metabolic/Nutritional:** glycosuria, hyperuricemia, hyponatremia, increased alkaline phosphatase, thirst, vitamin B12 deficiency, weight increase, weight decrease; **Musculoskeletal:** arthralgia, arthritis aggravated, arthralgia, cramps, fibromyalgia syndrome, hernia, polymyalgia rheumatica; **Nervous System/Psychiatric:** anorexia, apathy, appetite increased, confusion, depression aggravated, dizziness, hyperreflexia, nervousness, hypoesthesia, impotence, insomnia, migraine, migraine aggravated, paresthesia, sleep disorder, somnolence, tremor, vertigo, visual field defect; **Reproductive:** dysmenorrhea, menstrual disorder, vaginitis; **Respiratory:** asthma aggravated, coughing, dyspnea, larynx edema, pharyngitis, rhinitis, sinusitis; **Skin and Appendages:** acne, angioedema, dermatitis, pruritus, pruritus ani, rash, rash erythematous, rash maculopapular, skin inflammation, sweating increased, urticaria; **Special Senses:** otitis media, parosmia, taste loss, taste perversion; **Urogenital:** abnormal urine, albuminuria, cystitis, dysuria, fungal infection, hematuria, micturition frequency, moniliasis, genital moniliasis, polyuria; **Visual:** conjunctivitis, vision abnormal. Endoscopic findings that were reported as adverse events include: duodenitis, esophagitis, esophageal stricture, esophageal ulceration, esophageal varices, gastric ulcer, gastritis, hernia, benign polyps or nodules, Barrett's esophagus, and mucosal discoloration. Two placebo-controlled studies were conducted in 710 patients for the treatment of symptomatic gastroesophageal reflux disease. The most common adverse events that were reported as possibly or probably related to NEXIUM were diarrhea (4.3%), headache (3.8%), and abdominal pain (3.8%). Postmarketing Reports – There have been spontaneous reports of adverse events with postmarketing use of esomeprazole. These reports have included rare cases of anaphylactic reaction and myalgia, severe dermatologic reactions, including toxic epidermal necrolysis (TEN, some fatal), Stevens-Johnson syndrome, and erythema multiforme, and pancreatitis. Very rarely, hepatitis with or without jaundice has been reported. Other adverse events not observed with NEXIUM, but occurring with omeprazole can be found in the omeprazole package insert. **ADVERSE REACTIONS** section. **OVERDOSAGE** A single oral dose of esomeprazole at 510 mg/kg (about 103 times the human dose on a body surface area basis), was lethal to rats. The major signs of acute toxicity were reduced motor activity, changes in respiratory frequency, tremor, ataxia, and intermittent clonic convulsions. There have been some reports of overdose with esomeprazole. Reports have been received of overdose with omeprazole in humans. Doses ranged up to 2,400 mg (120 times the usual recommended clinical dose). Manifestations were variable, but included confusion, drowsiness, blurred vision, tachycardia, nausea, diaphoresis, flushing, headache, dry mouth, and other adverse reactions similar to those seen in normal clinical experience (see omeprazole package insert-ADVERSE REACTIONS). No specific antidote for esomeprazole is known. Since esomeprazole is extensively protein bound, it is not expected to be removed by dialysis. In the event of overdose, treatment should be symptomatic and supportive. As with the management of any overdose, the possibility of multiple drug ingestion should be considered. For current information on treatment of any drug overdose, a certified Regional Poison Control Center should be contacted. Telephone numbers are listed in the Physicians' Desk Reference (PDR) or local telephone book. **DOSE AND ADMINISTRATION** Please see full Prescribing Information for recommended adult dosages and dosage adjustments for Special Populations for NEXIUM.

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vet voice

and later in the Illinois Army National Guard. I'm proud of my time in the service and never felt anything but a veteran until a few years ago when veterans began to be classified by era. My dad served in the Marines during World War II, working as a mechanic on B-25s. He was never called anything but a World War II veteran even though he never saw combat. A veteran is a veteran. I have a son who last year served in Iraq and will soon return to that country. He is a veteran. Our daughter is in the Illinois Army National Guard and has served active duty. She is a veteran. Her husband serves in the Army National Guard and just returned from Iraq. He is a veteran. We all did our duty as ordered.

— Cliff Oliver, East Peoria, Ill.

Making the grade

I am a World War II veteran who hasn't always belonged to the Legion, my membership for a long time interrupted by my relocation away from my home post. I renewed a year ago and have received the magazine since. How I ever could not receive it I now do not understand. Our magazine – choice of featured articles, clear reporting, patriotic viewpoint and nostalgia from service days – makes belonging to the Legion a must. It also makes you proud to be an American and a veteran.

The article "Rebirth of a Nation" gives the reader insight and pride about what is happening in Afghanistan. The lead picture of machines laying asphalt captures the essence of progress described in the article. The piece "Legion Wins Battle Over VA

Eye Surgery” assures veterans that we have an advocate at the decision-making level.

My teaching background forces me to assign a grade to your product, and it's an A+.

– Thomas Buck, Rockville, Md.

‘Entrenched on the Bench’

Paul Jacobs makes the case for abolishing lifetime tenures for federal judges (“Entrenched on the Bench,” March), arguing that without reining in their length of service on the bench, members of the federal judiciary will engage in judicial activism, presidential cronyism, excessive independence and abuse of power. The length of service of the Supreme Court’s most outstanding members, however, undermines his argument and favors retention of lifetime appointments. Of the 107 persons who have served on the Court during its 216 years, 16 are ranked as “great” by the “Oxford Companion to the Supreme Court of the United States,” including John Marshall (34), Hugo L. Black (34), William J. Brennan (33), Joseph Story (33), John M. Harlan I (33), William Johnson (30), Oliver Wendell Holmes (29), Roger B. Taney (28), Samuel F. Miller (28), Felix Frankfurter (23), Louis Brandeis (22), Joseph Bradley (21), Harlan F. Stone (21), Charles Evans Hughes (17), Earl Warren (15) and Benjamin Cardozo (6).

With all its imperfections, lifetime appointments for federal judges have served the nation well and should not be abandoned. Term limits are a bad idea.

– Russell Fridley, Shoreview, Minn.

You list 13 U.S. Supreme Court justices who served 30 years or

more on the Supreme Court. Conspicuously absent was the name of John Marshall, who served as chief justice for 34 years. Between 1801 and 1835, Marshall’s rulings helped mold the conscience of the United States. Warren Burger, chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court from 1969 to 1986, wrote, “When one speaks of the great chief justice ... every literate person knows the reference is to John Marshall.”

– Charles Wetterer, Huntington, N.Y.

Mum on Mumford?

I read with great anticipation the articles about the Library of Congress (“National Treasure,” March). But when I got to the list of past librarians of Congress, I was truly disappointed not to see the name of my great-uncle, Quincy Mumford, who headed the library during the 1960s.

– Jim Dawson, Merced, Calif.

Editor’s note: The chart in the March issue listed nine of the 12 past librarians of Congress. In addition to L. Quincy Mumford, Luther H. Evans (1945-1953) and Patrick Magruder (1807-1815) were not listed.

Prostate screens

“A Look at Prostate Screening” (March) is full of distortions. First, the idea that prostate screening causes more harm than good is wrong. Yearly PSA testing for older men is essential. Second, I recently lost two good friends because PSA screening was not done regularly and, when it was done, their prostate cancer was misdiagnosed as slow-growing. Well, the cancer grew fast and took their lives. They both died from prostate

cancer or resulting complications. Third, it appears VA is trying to save some money by not recommending a yearly PSA for veterans. My advice to older veterans is a yearly PSA. If diagnosed with prostate cancer, seek immediate treatment.

– Tim Stanley, Rosemead, Calif.

In talking about men diagnosed with prostate cancer, and in support of postponing treatment, Dr. Stephan Fihn says, “For some of those men ... the disease usually progresses slowly.” What about those whose cancer is aggressive? By encouraging men to believe the test may not be a good idea because it may be false, or it may indicate a non-cancerous issue, or even if correct it may not require treatment, you are encouraging men not to be screened. Of those you encourage not to be screened, some will have cancer. An early screening would have allowed them to work with their doctors to determine a treatment plan.

– Stephen Hill, Waterbury Center, Vt.

Gold Star salute

I am a Legion member, and upon reading a recent *American Legion Magazine* I came upon the Blue Star Program. Our son, Leonard Wade Adams, died in Iraq on Jan. 24. We had a Blue Star, and now we have a Gold Star, thanks to Barbara Hutchens of Charlotte, N.C. Thanks for the program, and thanks to people like Barbara, who has two sons in service. We will support the troops until we take our last breath. God bless America and keep our troops safe.

– Bob and Shirley Adams, Raleigh, N.C.

7

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE WELCOMES YOUR OPINIONS

Include your hometown and a daytime phone number for verification. All letters published are subject to editing.

Due to the volume of mail received, not every letter can be acknowledged.

The American Legion Magazine, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206 • magazine@legion.org

How to give without cost

Gas prices have spent most of the year at more than \$2 a gallon. The stock market has been a roller coaster of ups and downs. The economy has been shaky, as it often is during wartime. And yet members of The American Legion family have contributed more than \$300,000 to the National Emergency Fund this year. Donations keep rolling into the Child Welfare Foundation, the Children's Miracle Network and the American Legacy Scholarship Fund.

The Soldiers for Soldiers program is another way to raise money for Legion programs – without costing out-of-pocket dollars. The idea came from two Legionnaires: U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Fallon O'Brien and Staff Sgt. Kenneth O'Brien, who co-founded the program to recycle empty inkjet cartridges and used cell phones to raise money for service-members and their families. In their spare time, and with a little effort, the pair started collecting the items on and off Fairchild Air Force Base in Washington. Within a month, they raised nearly \$500.

Soldiers for Soldiers program checklist

- Establish a post point of contact and a collection location.
- Encourage post members to look around for recyclables they may have.
- Remind members to share information with family, friends, schools and businesses.
- Establish collection points in schools, businesses and government offices. Reach out to the community.
- Involve the Boy Scouts.
- Use various media to communicate the program to the community.
- Direct friends, family and business acquaintances who live outside your immediate area to visit legion.org and ask them to drop off inkjet cartridges at local Legion posts.

unit for each member will be recognized on a Soldiers for Soldiers honor roll. Posts that collect two units for every member will be placed on the gold honor roll.

If the Legion collects 1.5 million units – either cell phones or inkjet cartridges – before July 1, 2006, the programs will receive a \$100,000 bonus. All it takes is a little effort, and programs that help troops, veterans and their families will benefit greatly. The potential is limitless to make an even bigger difference in the lives of Americans who need us.

The O'Briens approached the Legion to find a home for the program. In November, the National Executive Committee passed a resolution and entered an agreement with Soldiers for Soldiers and Priceless Inkjet Cartridge Co.

No purchase is required. Soldiers for Soldiers pays the Legion \$1 for each inkjet cartridge and \$3 for each cell phone. Funds will be distributed to the National Emergency Fund, Child Welfare Foundation and Legacy Scholarship Fund.

Visit the Legion Web site at legion.org and click on the "Soldiers for Soldiers" link to get a list of the cartridges and cell phones included in the program. Priceless Inkjet will pay for the shipping of items from posts, through prepaid UPS labels available online. Fifty empty cartridges or 25 used cell phones are the minimum per package.

Posts must register to participate at the Soldiers for Soldiers Web site. Each post that registers will serve as a collection point. Posts that collect one



James V. Carroll

National Commander
Thomas P. Cadmus

MEMORANDA

REMEMBER THE PLEDGE ON

FLAG DAY: On June 14, Flag Day, all patriotic Americans are asked to take a moment at 7 p.m. Eastern time to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

'AMERICA'S VETERANS'

VIDEOS: Legion posts can help their local schools as they plan next fall's lessons by purchasing "America's Veterans," a video with accompanying teacher's guide, aimed to teach students in grades 5 to 8 about veterans and the meaning of Veterans Day. The video is only \$3.95 and may be purchased online. emblem.legion.org

AMERICAN LEGACY

SCHOLARSHIPS: Limited-edition "Ruptured Duck" lapel pins will be given, while supplies last, to those who donate \$10 or more to the American Legacy Scholarship fund, established after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, to provide college money for the children of U.S. service-members killed on duty since then.

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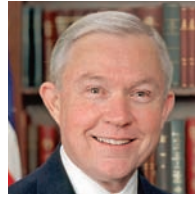
Ratify Law of the Sea Treaty



SUPPORT

Adm. Vern Clark, U.S. Navy

■ Clark has served as the 27th chief of naval operations since July 21, 2000.



OPPOSE

Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala.

■ Sessions, a retired captain in the U.S. Army Reserve, is chairman of the Senate Strategic Forces Subcommittee.

The Law of the Sea Convention enhances national security by strengthening our navy's freedom to maneuver under the authority of widely recognized and accepted law. This has never been more important than today, as the U.S. Navy delivers persistent, credible combat power in the global war on terror. Assured access throughout the world's oceans enables our navy to protect U.S. interests across the globe, as a flexible and powerful instrument of national policy.

Successful military operations in the 21st century place a premium on using the vast international maneuvering space of the sea. Deployed naval forces, ready to act with power and precision during conflicts, also execute important roles in peacetime. Across a wide scope of operations – from disaster relief to counter-narcotics patrols, regional stability operations, homeland defense missions and deterrence efforts – the importance of access and operational flexibility is continuously underscored.

The Law of the Sea Convention preserves our freedom of navigation and ensures the sovereignty of our warships and public vessels. It counters excessive maritime claims, safeguards operational activities and reinforces the rule of international law in maritime affairs. When our sailors represent this nation around the world, they need this nation's commitment to those safeguards.

U.S. military leaders support the Law of the Sea Convention because it strengthens the security of our nation. When we send servicemen and women into harm's way, they deserve the protection derived from a widely accepted treaty supported by many nations around the world. The Law of the Sea Convention fortifies our use of the maritime domain and increases the Navy's effectiveness as an instrument of national policy. I fully support ratification of the Law of the Sea Convention.

On Dec. 10, 1982, the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea was opened for signature. President Reagan refused to sign the treaty. He was correct.

In 1994, President Clinton signed the treaty along with a new side agreement designed to answer some criticisms.

However, Reagan's attorney general, Ed Meese, warns that the Clinton side agreement did not change the underlying treaty or fix the problems with it.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

Some say the Law of the Sea Treaty guarantees freedom of navigation.

Critics say it's a trap that will undermine national sovereignty.

Peter Leitner, a scholar and strategic-trade adviser for the Pentagon, says the treaty creates an entirely new government, "complete with a legislature, an executive, a judiciary and a secretariat." According to the Reserve Officers Association, the treaty "will grant sweeping powers to the United Nations to impose taxes, impose legal sanctions, and regulate air, sea and space commerce."

The treaty undermines President Bush's Proliferation Security Initiative. Under the treaty, the United States could not board a foreign vessel even if it is suspected of carrying weapons of mass destruction. If our warship encountered a foreign ship, it is not justified in boarding it "unless there is reasonable ground for suspecting that the ship is engaged in piracy ... the slave trade ... unauthorized broadcasting" or being "without nationality."

The treaty empowers the new government with a powerful court that has jurisdiction over "all disputes submitted to it in accordance with the convention." The United States wisely refused to join the International Criminal Court out of concern that U.S. service personnel could be prosecuted for legitimate military activities. There is no need to join this new court either.

We must be alert to avoid being entangled in international regimes that weaken our leadership capability and empower international organizations that don't share our values or interests.

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The Losing-Our- Sovereignty Treaty

BY FRANK J. GAFFNEY JR.

*The Law of
the Sea Treaty
and other
forms of
'lawfare' are
being used
to undermine
U.S. strength
abroad.*

“Lawfare” is a term that describes the phenomenon whereby politically derived “laws” – in the form of treaty obligations, rulings by multi-lateral courts, so-called “international norms,” even pronouncements by U.N. conferences – are employed in asymmetric warfare against the U.S. military. Increasingly, these tactics are being used against us in much the same way the fictional Lilliputians used thousands of tiny ropes to tie down the vastly more powerful Gulliver.

The danger is that over time, the steady – and often stealthy – accumulation of these foreign-manufactured “laws” will seriously erode our nation’s sovereignty – notably, the freedom of decision-making and action that is every bit as critical to our security and military power as is our formidable arsenal.

The problem has grown so serious that the Bush administration has explicitly cited it in the 2005 National Defense Strategy (NDS), the document designed to guide the Pentagon’s Quadrennial Defense Review. The NDS stated: “Our strength as a nation state will continue to be challenged by those who employ a strategy of the weak using international (and) judicial processes.”

The strategy of using international fora and judicial processes to undermine U.S. strength may start overseas, but its success lies in the judiciary. American judges allow foreign precedents to interpret, and even to supersede, the U.S. Constitution. Examples include the recent Supreme Court decision that the execution of minors is unconstitutional. The majority opinion

explicitly cited the hostile attitudes of other countries toward this practice and its prohibition under a treaty on the rights of the child – a treaty the United States has signed but not ratified.

Incredible as it may seem, even as the U.S. government is showing a growing appreciation of the dangers of lawfare for our military, it is poised to compound the problem enormously.

Land of the LOST. The Bush administration has asked the Senate to ratify “as soon as possible” a treaty formally called the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, better known as the Law of the Sea Treaty, or LOST. Given the lawfare potential and other defects of this accord, however, the LOST acronym would more accurately be said to stand for the “Losing-Our-Sovereignty Treaty.”

Ironically, if the Senate actually does agree to the ratification of this sovereignty-sapping treaty, it will be thanks to legislators’ perception that the U.S. military really needs and wants LOST to become the “supreme law of the land.” As *The Washington Times* reported March 7, “Sen. Chuck Hagel of Nebraska, a senior member of the Foreign Relations Committee, believes the military’s support should be enough to secure ratification. ‘It’s the right thing to do,’ Hagel said. ‘Every president since it was signed, Republican and Democrat, has supported it. Secretary Rumsfeld, every Navy officer, every chief of naval operations. I mean, I don’t know what more credibility you want than having our military leaders support it.’”

How We Got Here. LOST started out some 30 years ago as a modest updating of four conventions on the Law of the Sea, dating from 1958. The idea was to incorporate into the existing understandings about customary navigational practice additional provisions governing transit of archipelagoes and international straits. Such “rules of the road” are, understandably, important to the U.S. Navy and American shipping interests, and they help explain the Navy’s strong interest in LOST.

Unfortunately, in the late 1970s and

early ’80s, the negotiations were hijacked by a combination of advocates of one-world government, the Soviet Union and the so-called Non-Aligned Movement. Their avowed purpose was to advance what was then known as the New International Economic Order, a socialist agenda aimed at diverting wealth and power from the United States and other Western democracies to the underdeveloped world and the communist bloc.

The LOST negotiations’ anti-U.S. majority ensured that the treaty wound up doing much more than enshrining certain navigation rights. It also created a new supra-national organization, replete with executive, legislative and judicial branches, and accorded unprecedented powers. These powers included the authority to effect mandatory dispute resolution and – for the first time in the history of U.N. agencies – the ability to impose what amounts to taxes.

The specific task of this organization, dubbed the International Seabed Authority (ISA), was to govern what the majority called an “international commons” – the potentially valuable resources on and under the sea beds in international waters and, by extension, the oceans and even the airspace above them. The ISA was designed to ensure that the rights, technical capabilities, know-how and proceeds involved in exploiting the undersea’s “common heritage of all mankind” would be available to the world’s poorer nations, not just its richer ones.

The Real Agenda. The true and far-less-altruistic purpose of the International Seabed Authority, however, was spelled out by an organization that played a prominent role in its creation: the World Federalist Association (WFA), a group committed to one-world government. A contemporary WFA position paper stated, in part:

■ “Let the U.N. establish new agencies such as an International Criminal Court (which can try individuals for violations of international law).

■ “An organization is *already in the*

The Law of the Sea Treaty

Known to supporters by its official acronym, UNCLOS, and as LOST to its opponents, the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea is a group of treaties conceived by the United Nations in 1982 as a method for governing navigational and transit activities on, over and beneath the ocean’s surface. In addition to establishing international standards for territorial limits on rights of passage for military, shipping and transport vessels, the treaty contains provisions on the regulation of deep-sea mining and the redistribution of wealth to underdeveloped countries. It contains sections regarding marine trade, pollution, research and dispute resolution.

"... were the United States to become a party to the Law of the Sea Treaty, non-governmental organizations and unfriendly regimes will try to secure rulings that restrict the U.S. Armed Forces' operational mobility and flexibility."

process of being developed to control the exploitation of ocean resources, and similar agencies could be created to govern Antarctica and the moon.

■ *"By means of these voluntarily funded functional agencies, national sovereignty would be gradually eroded until it is no longer an issue.*

■ *"Eventually, a world federation can be formally adopted with little resistance."* (Emphases added.)

Even before Ronald Reagan became president, he recognized the danger of such an arrangement. In an Oct. 10, 1978, radio commentary, he offered a stinging critique of the International Seabed Authority then taking shape at the hands of "underdeveloped nations who now control the (U.N.) General Assembly," which he said "were looking for a free ride at our expense – again." Reagan warned about the danger of investing in such an institution the power to wage what we now call "lawfare" against the United States. "We have the means at our disposal to protect our ocean interests," he said, "and we *shall* protect those interests if a comprehensive treaty eludes us."

After Reagan entered the Oval Office, he directed U.S. negotiators to seek more than 1,000 changes in the then-evolving Law of the Sea Treaty text. When virtually all these were rejected by the anti-U.S. majority, he refused to sign LOST. Reagan made clear that the United States would honor the treaty's navigational provisions but not those involving the International Seabed Authority and obliging us to submit to mandatory dispute resolution.

The latter point is especially important, since the means for settling disputes amount to a "stacked deck." On one hand is the International Law of the Sea Tribunal, a multilateral, politicized court like the International Criminal Court, which Bush wisely decided in 2002 was not in America's interest.

Among the troubling attributes of the LOST tribunal is the fact that it has the authority to define its own jurisdiction. Already, the tribunal has decided that it can rule on cases involving activities on the sovereign soil of member states – a



The Law of the Sea Treaty poses threats to U.S. military power and decision-making on the high seas. *U.S. Navy*

formula for endless meddling in America's internal affairs. Given the rotating nature of the nations represented on the court, we might not even have a judge on the panel when matters affecting our interests are adjudicated. At the very least, we can be certain that the same anti-U.S. majority that hijacked the LOST negotiations will work against our interests in that court.

On the other hand, the prospects for the alternative dispute-resolution mechanisms – binding arbitration panels – are no better. This is so because the arbitrators who will cast the deciding votes are to be selected by the International Law of the Sea Tribunal or the U.N. secretary general.

How Big a Problem? For these reasons, the potential is very real for such entities to be used as lawfare weapons against the U.S. military and the nation's sovereignty. Of particular concern is the prospect that, were the United States to become a party to the Law of the Sea Treaty, non-governmental organizations and unfriendly regimes will try to secure rulings that restrict the U.S. Armed Forces' operational mobility and flexibility.

This should not be hard to do since we would, under LOST, be assuming commitments that lend themselves to such constraints. For example, Article 88 declares that the high seas will be "reserved" for peaceful purposes. Article 301 says that parties must refrain from "the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state."

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Legion positions on LOST

The American Legion passed resolutions concerning the Law of the Sea Treaty at national conventions in 1972, 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1986. Resolutions passed in the 1980s supported President Reagan's decision not to sign the Law of the Sea Treaty. Those resolutions urged the president and Congress to take all effective steps ensuring that the United States would enjoy all the rights, benefits and responsibilities stemming from all provisions of LOST, except those relating to deep seabed mining, and urged the president and Congress to devise unilateral or multilateral arrangements providing for U.S. companies to participate in deep seabed mining under conditions of free enterprise and outside the control of the regime specified in the Law of the Sea Treaty, subject only to reasonable environmental controls.

Article 19 effectively prohibits the use of territorial waters to collect intelligence and conduct other operations within 12 miles of foreign shores. And Article 20 stipulates that submarines must travel on the surface and show their flags in those same territorial waters. All these obligations conflict with current U.S. practice.

Proponents of the treaty claim that we need not worry about such provisions and their possible adverse implications. They note correctly that Article 298 allows "military activities" to be exempted. The problem is that those activities are not defined in the treaty, leaving it up to the tribunal to determine whether a given action – for instance, naval vessels' use of active sonar that some contend is harming dolphins and whales – is a military one, or an environmental hazard. Given the LOST tribunal's composition, it would be foolish to assume the court will affirm that view.

LOST's advocates also argue that the defects Reagan identified have been "fixed," thanks to an agreement negotiated in 1994 during the Clinton administration. The truth is that the 1994 accord did not actually change the underlying Law of the Sea Treaty. By its terms, the treaty could not be amended prior to last November. In addition, many of Reagan's concerns were not satisfactorily addressed in the Clinton accord. Even those that were – such as the obligation under LOST to transfer equipment and data that could be useful for submarine and/or anti-submarine warfare – simply created responsibilities that conflict with those in the treaty, an invitation to more unfavorable decisions by the tribunal.

Some would have us believe that, because the Law of the Sea Tribunal has not been very aggressive in its rulings to date, fears that it would do so in the future are greatly exaggerated. This reassurance appears to be misleading, perhaps deliberately so. Consider the cynical bait-and-switch strategy recommended by professor Bernard Oxman, one of the U.S. LOST negotiators and a vocal advocate for its ratification,

expressed in the *European International Law Journal* in 1996:

"... Those who wish to realize fully the contributions of the Convention to the rule of law will need to exercise restraint and wisdom in at least the immediate future, lest they complicate the ratification process in one or more states. ... I do not dissent from the view that the development of international law benefits from more cases and decisions by the Court. My view is simply that, because of its compromissory clauses, a globally ratified Convention promises many more cases in the future, and that it would be unfortunate if one or two cases during this delicate interim period, when so many governments are considering ratification, had the effect of prejudicing that promise." (Emphases added.)

By "rule of law," Oxman and treaty supporters mean "lawfare" – world government at the expense of U.S. sovereignty and that of other nations. By "restraint," they transparently want to conceal the full extent of LOST's impact until after the United States has ratified the treaty and become subject to its terms.

Still a Mistake. The Law of the Sea Treaty was not in our interest in 1982 and that continues to be the case. If anything, LOST would surely become even less satisfactory should we become a party to it.

The nation has been well served over the past 23 years by remaining outside this accord and observing those provisions concerning navigation that *are* consistent with our interests and with customary international law. We should perpetuate this arrangement and, thereby, protect our ability to assure freedom of the seas, safeguard our sovereignty and minimize the risk of lawfare being successfully waged against both. 🌊

Frank J. Gaffney Jr. held senior positions in the Reagan Defense Department. He is currently president of the Center for Security Policy in Washington.

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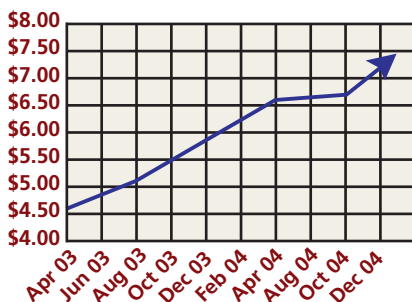
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"To care for him..."

... who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan." Abraham Lincoln spoke these words as the bloody Civil War came to a close. His mind was focused on healing not only his soldiers but his nation. They are, in so many respects, one and the same. Thus, Lincoln's words ultimately became VA's motto and mission. Today, as the war on terrorism enters its fourth year, a new generation is coming home from battle, seeking the compassion of a grateful nation. Different leaders in Washington have different visions on how America can best pay its debt to veterans, to whom that debt shall be paid, and how much. Following are statements from, and interviews with, VA Secretary R. James Nicholson, Rep. Steve Buyer, Rep. Lane Evans, Sen. Larry Craig, Sen. Daniel Akaka and American Legion National Commander Thomas P. Cadmus. Their visions may seem at times divided. But their purpose is shared. It is the purpose found in Lincoln's words. Today, they still resonate.



'VA is the instrument of America's gratitude.'

As you read this issue of *The American Legion Magazine*, young men and women in uniform – volunteers from the four corners of America – are defending our nation and the social, political and spiritual values we cherish. They are fighting the hate-tinged tide of terrorism that seeks nothing less than the demise of democracy and the disruption of its march of freedom for oppressed people everywhere. Americans have never allowed that evil to stand in our midst.

Our World War II veterans defeated the global spread of evil. Our Korean War veterans drove it back across the DMZ. Our Vietnam veterans stood against it at Khe Sanh and Hue and in the Ia Drang Valley. Desert Storm veterans dispatched it with a lightning thrust. In Afghanistan and Iraq, our troops have unshackled evil's bonds, opening doors to liberty and self-determination for people too long enchained by tyrants. During the Cold War, and in every subsequent theater of conflict in which our citizen-soldiers answered the call to arms against dark forces, the spirit, know-how and determination of U.S. fighting men and women prevailed.

My service in the U.S. Army was the defining experience of my life and instilled in me a strong sense of duty and esteem for my fellow veterans. I am deeply honored that President Bush has given me the opportunity to serve as secretary of Veterans Affairs, because VA is the instrument of America's expression of gratitude to her defenders.

The president is committed to honor our nation's obligation to veterans with the full measure of benefits and services VA is uniquely qualified to deliver. To do so in an era of fiscal restraint requires responsible stewardship and long-term planning to ensure that our health-care resources continue to be concentrated on care for veterans most in need of the department's services.

It is more important than ever that VA concentrate its resources, policies and strategies on those veterans identified by Congress as high priority. The president's 2006 budget request includes policies and strategies used successfully during

the past few years to focus VA health-care resources on veterans with service-connected disabilities, those with lower incomes and veterans needing our specialized services.

VA must ensure that every seriously injured or ill serviceman or woman returning from combat receives priority treatment and consideration. The principal mechanism to achieve that goal is a seamless transition between VA and the Department of Defense. We will continue to work closely with DoD by moving records more efficiently between the two agencies, sharing critical medical information electronically, protecting the health of troops stationed in areas where environmental hazards pose threats, and processing benefit claims as one shared system.

In concert with the seamless transition for today's

servicemen and women, we will continue our steadfast commitment to providing high-quality and accessible health care that sets the national standard of excellence. We must also improve our disability compensation claims processes in order to achieve timely and equitable delivery of benefits our veterans have earned. And, with grateful hearts, we must maintain our national cemeteries as shrines to the memories and contributions of our honored dead.

The coming years hold great promise for VA and the veterans we are proud to serve. We also face significant challenges as the number of veterans seeking our services increases, placing new demands on our facilities and our budgets. I am confident we will meet every challenge with solutions that are, first and foremost, responsive to the needs of America's veterans. I am confident because we have a wonderful workforce of dedicated, competent professionals at VA who share my passion for fulfilling our mission: taking care of our veterans.



James V. Carroll

R. James Nicholson was sworn in as VA Secretary on Feb. 1. Prior to his appointment, Nicholson served as U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See. He also headed the Republican National Committee from 1996 to 2000. He is a Vietnam War Army veteran and retired as a colonel.

'We have a VA health-care system unlike what Congress intended.'

The American Legion Magazine: *What qualities do you bring to the chairmanship of the House Veterans Affairs Committee?*

Rep. Steve Buyer: I come from a family of military heritage. I begin my responsibilities as chairman by focusing myself on who we as a nation care for. I recently went to the war memorial across from The American Legion headquarters in Indianapolis because my grandfather's name is on that wall. He's a World War I veteran. Two great uncles are also on that wall. My father is a graduate of Culver Military Academy and the Citadel. He declined a commission in the Army because he wanted to go to dental school in 1950, but before he could make it to school he was drafted as a recruit into Korea. So, I'm the proud son of an Army sergeant, who was a medic and took care of patients in the burn ward at Brook Army Hospital in San Antonio.

I have a brother who is a colonel on active duty, and I am a colonel in the Army Reserves and have served in times of war and peace. I enjoy when I have the opportunity to put on the uniform. It permits me to relate to the men and women who are still serving. I think it allows me to feel the cohesion that is necessary for our military to be effective.

As chairman, I intend to focus on where we go from here. Today, we have a VA health-care system unlike what Congress intended. We hoped the eligibility reform act of 1996 would create a VA health system that was both cost-neutral and revenue-enhancing. That is not the case today. As chairman, I hope to refocus VA's efforts so that it may concentrate on its core constituency.

Q: *Who is in the core constituency?*

A: The core constituency is categories 1 through 6. I was puzzled during hearings that The American Legion wanted to quibble over who are the core constituency, because the core constituency is a defined population through our heritage, based on military values. Now it appears that some want to create a theme that all veterans are veterans and all veterans should be treated the same. That theme goes against our military values.

Q: *Do you foresee VA lifting its enrollment suspension on Priority Group 8 veterans?*

A: VA is very challenged to care for the disabled and special-needs veterans. I don't know of a single non-service-connected veteran who has ever come up to me and said, "Steve, put me ahead of the line." They won't say that, because it's contrary to our military values. And I intend to fulfill our military values. What makes us different is

that we put our comrades who are disabled – the sickest, and those who have special needs – before ourselves. That's a military value a lot of people do not understand.

Most people in the face of a threat seek shelter and protection. But people in military life expose themselves to danger and loss of life to save someone else they don't even know because

he's a buddy. And that's a military value and concept also recognized in our health system. That's why we created Priorities 1 through 7 and later Priority 8. But we also gave discretionary authority to the secretary to make decisions. Even though we opened enrollment, we did not intend for VA to become the veterans' pharmacy. That is written into the 1996 law. We always have to be reflective on what was the intent when the system was created.

Q: *What fuels your opposition to mandatory funding for VA health care?*

A: You have to go back to the eligibility reform of 1996. The system, the way it is today, is not what Congress expected. It is not budget-neutral or revenue-enhancing. If this were a health system that we created with at-risk capital, it would have gone bankrupt. That was not the intention when we did eligibility reform. So, it's rather hollow to advocate – no, it's really rather inappropriate to call for mandatory funding of a system that was created based on false assumptions, as though we should ignore the mistakes that were made.

I also recognize that there is doublespeak out there. On the one hand, we brag about the health

Steve Buyer was first elected to Congress in 1992. Serving his seventh term, he currently represents Indiana's Fourth Congressional District. Buyer is a colonel in the Army Reserve and served on active duty as an operational law judge advocate during the Gulf War.



care-system and have every reason to be boastful. It's not my father's VA. We have some of the most cutting-edge technology. We have great employees and staff working for VA. So on one hand, we say we have a great system, a system run with discretionary funding. On the other hand, we say if you don't have mandatory funding – well, all the negatives with the system are brought up. So what we have out there is doublespeak.

Q: *What is your view regarding bed numbers for long-term care veterans and shifting more of that responsibility to states?*

A: I'm going to be a good listener on this one. I know there are concerns among some states regarding per-diem rates. The federal government has had a long-standing relationship with regard to our states and how they care for veterans and veterans' homes. It was done so that the federal government did not get into the business of building nursing homes.

Q: *What is your forecast for concurrent receipt of VA disability compensation and DoD retirement pay?*

A: I think we have done very well. I think Congress has been trying to keep its focus on caring for the most disabled and for those veterans who have been exposed to wartime injuries. I think Congress is leaning toward the issue incrementally.

Q: *Do you expect Congress to authorize Medicare reimbursement to VA?*

A: I don't see the Ways and Means Committee cooperating with VA to do that. I know that there are advocates out there who are saying the federal dollar is (interchangeable). Why shouldn't a veteran who has paid into Medicare be able to use his Medicare benefits at VA? What difference does it make? That argument sounds good and might make a good front-page story in color. But what effect will that have upon a nation that has a priority of caring first for disabled veterans with specialty needs or who are indigent? Things sound great, but you have to consider the consequences as well as unintended consequences.

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Q: *Do you have a list of goals you hope to accomplish during the 109th Congress?*

A: I hope to see a VA that focuses itself back on its core constituency to fulfill the country's responsibilities to care for the disabled, the injured, special-needs and indigent. I would like to see a timely and seamless transition for the men and women leaving active-duty service for civilian life. I'm hopeful that we also can be consistent with regard to how VA makes claims determinations in different regions of the country. That's inconsistent today.

I'm hopeful that we are productive with regard to how I reorganized the committee. I reorganized the Benefits Subcommittee by splitting it into two subcommittees. One will be the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and the other will be Economic Affairs. I believe that just because a soldier's, sailor's, airman's or Marine's life may have changed we have the responsibility to give them an opportunity to live beyond government assistance. We hope to beef up our focus on vocational rehabilitation and our training and our housing and our education for our military people returning to civilian life. 🌿

'Budget ... devastates programs for veterans.'

The American Legion Magazine: *Why are you such a vocal critic of the president's 2006 budget proposal for VA?*

Rep. Lane Evans: The budget submitted by the White House is one of the most dishonest, disingenuous and insensitive documents I've seen in over two decades in Congress. The administration's budget shortchanges the nation's sick and disabled veterans and seeks to force hundreds of thousands of additional deserving veterans out of the VA health-care system.

In his State of the Union message, President Bush saluted the bravery and sacrifice of our troops and promised that a grateful country will do everything possible to help them recover. The budget he has proposed, which devastates programs for veterans, instead makes a cruel mockery of his own rhetoric.

Q: *What VA programs and services will be affected?*

A: The Bush administration seeks a mere 0.5 percent more for 2006 than Congress appropriated for 2005. It ignores the 13 percent to 14 percent VA testified it needs annually to maintain services at current levels. Excluding the proposed new fees and increased co-payments, the budget also falls short of the amount the Congressional Budget Office estimates VA needs to keep pace with appropriated 2005 purchasing power.

The president, for the third straight year, seeks to impose a \$250 annual enrollment fee for medical care to Priority 7 and enrolled Priority 8 veterans and seeks to double the amount they pay for prescription drugs. According to the administration's own numbers, this will result in forcing 213,000 additional veterans out of the system.

The budget seeks to repeal the law that requires VA to maintain a certain level of long-term care beds in its facilities. It halts funding for state grants for critically needed extended-care facilities and reduces by 61 percent the census it supports in existing state homes by reducing per-diem payments. What the administration is trying to do is to limit eligibility for

Lane Evans was first elected in 1982 to represent his state's 17th Congressional District. He is serving his 11th term. He is a Vietnam War veteran of the Marine Corps and was awarded in 1990 the Vietnam Veterans of America's first annual President's Award.



nursing-home care in all of its facilities and shift the burden to the states that are already struggling with long-term care costs. Veterans over the age of 85 are most likely to need long-term institutional care, and their numbers are expected to double in the next eight years. These cuts will pull the rug out from many of our nation's oldest veterans and leave older and less severely disabled veterans with no place to go.

The president's budget also cuts \$9 million from VA's prosthetic research program, whose achievements have benefited veterans and other Americans alike. The budget does not provide for the influx of troops returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, who will eventually seek VA care. The administration's intention to weaken the VA health-care system is

evident in its proposal to cut medical-care line staff by 2 percent. That's 3,000 health-care employees, mostly nurses, at a time when VA already has a nursing shortage.

The bottom line is that the administration's budget is at least \$3 billion short in discretionary funding just to keep VA afloat without forcing one veteran to pay for another veteran's care. Let's face it: the president's budget is a total waste of paper and our time.

Q: *How do you propose to ensure a viable VA health-care system?*

A: I have introduced legislation to reform and enhance the funding process. H.R. 515, the Assured Funding for Veterans Health Care Act of 2005, would require the Treasury secretary to annually provide funding for the VA health-care system based on the number of enrollees in the system and the consumer price index for hospital-related services. In short, the bill would require mandatory funding for VA health care instead of the current discretionary funding process that is subject to the whims of any particular administration.

Rationing health care for this country's veterans is not a policy that anyone should support. When I joined the Marines, I didn't sign up for Category 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 enlistment, but that's what VA is doing to veterans today. My bill aims to prioritize health care for the men and women who served this country in uniform, over tax cuts for millionaires.

Q: *What role do you see veterans fulfilling in this effort?*

A: Veterans' groups should get out there and raise holy hell against what's happening. Legionnaires have done this time and time again to help veterans, and they need to get out there again. Americans, when they know the facts, have always supported veterans. They understand the sacrifices veterans make in service to their country and never waver in their gratitude. 🌿

U.S. House Committee on Veterans Affairs

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Michael Bilirakis, Fla.,
Vice Chairman

Terry Everett, Ala.

Cliff Stearns, Fla.

Jerry Moran, Kan.

Dan Burton, Ind.

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Stephanie Herseth, S.D.

Ted Strickland, Ohio

Darlene Hooley, Ore.

Silvestre Reyes, Texas

Shelley Berkley, Nev.

Tom Udall, N.M.

American Legion Resolution No. 331 (2004 National Convention, Nashville, Tenn.)

WHEREAS ...

... The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) annual budget consists of both mandatory and discretionary funding; and mandatory funding refers to a process where the level of funding is governed by formulas or criteria set forth in authorizing legislation rather than by appropriations; and under budget law, a mandatory program is one that requires provision of benefits to all who meet the eligibility requirements of the law; and ...

... Mandatory funding is provided for programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and VA compensation and pension; and in contrast, discretionary funding is "all other" funding subject to the annual appropriations process; and discretionary funding in VA's current annual budget provides for programs such as medical care, major and minor construction, National Cemetery Administration, State Extended Care Facility Grants, and State Cemetery Grants; and ...

... There have been annual struggles to obtain sufficient funding to provide access to quality care for eligible veterans seeking care in VA facilities; and a method to provide dependable, stable and sustained funding for veterans health care is needed; and mandatory funding is one component of a combination of funding mechanisms to ensure adequate VHA funding; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED ...

... That Congress designate VA medical care as mandatory spending; and ... that Congress continue to provide discretionary funding required to fully operate other programs within the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) budgetary jurisdiction; and, be it finally

RESOLVED ...

... That Congress provide, if necessary, supplemental appropriations for budgetary shortfalls in VHA's mandatory and discretionary appropriations to meet the health-care needs of America's veterans.

'There has to be balance. There has to be a reality check.'

The American Legion Magazine: *How can President Bush's plan for the 2006 VA budget meet the needs of veterans?*

Sen. Larry E. Craig: When we work out all of our differences, there's going to be adequate resources to take care of needs with possibly some reprioritizing. I say that because the reality is quite clear. We are not going to see a 10-percent increase or 9.4-percent increase in VA's budget, as it has increased over the last four years. We also have a mandate that was clear, with all the testimony we have taken to date, that there is a growing concern for the new veteran coming in. There are those coming out of Iraq and Afghanistan who are badly impaired. It is clearly our responsibility to deal with those up front – both the physical side and mental side. To make sure that happens, we will have to adjust priorities.

Larry Craig was first elected to Congress in 1980 to represent Idaho's First Congressional District. He was elected to the Senate in 1990. Craig is also on the board of directors of the National Rifle Association, and he co-founded and co-chairs the Congressional Property Rights Coalition.

In the end, the Congress of the United States is going to treat the veteran fairly and equitably in a just way. I don't question that. I'm confident I can take a budget to the floor that will do that.

Q: *How does VA prepare for a predicted demand spike for health-care services between 2008 and 2012?*

A: A decade ago, in some people's minds, VA was a second-class health-care delivery system. Today, by most observers' judgments, it is not only first-class, it's probably No. 1 in the nation. It rivals the top private hospitals. Sustaining that level of care is going to be tough, but we have put the pieces in place to do so. We have modernized it by bringing Internet technology and enhanced record classifications into the mix. These are examples that build efficiencies into the system that enable VA to sustain quality health care to veterans in the years to come.

Q: *How do you respond to veterans groups fighting for mandatory appropriations to fund VA health care?*

A: I have always struggled with entitlements. I say that because they become a driving force in the budget that squeezes out a lot of other priorities. I guess I would say to America's veterans today there are a good many of us here in Congress who

are going to assure that the American veteran gets served. Our record demonstrates that. While veterans might wish mandatory, or entitlement status, Congress is not going to grant that. It is something that we feel we have granted in too many categories, and we've created so much of the budget that is off-limits today.

The resources we deal with today are taxpayers' money. There has to be a balance. There has to be a reality check. But for us who are committed to funding veterans in an appropriate and adequate fashion, we're going to do that. History has demonstrated that Congress is not only sympathetic to veterans but they believe it to be an obligation. These are men and women who served

our country, walked in harm's way, and many of them came back impaired. We are not going to treat them in any unjust way.

Q: *Do you envision passage of legislation to permit all eligible veterans to receive, without penalty, both their military retirement pay and VA disability compensation?*

A: Very early on in the process – and Idaho veterans know this – I opposed concurrent receipt. I didn't see how we could get there because when we did concurrent receipts we moved it into the category of defense spending. It is important to say that in the end I did support it. I put up as many arguments as I could, but it was obvious to me that it was going to pass, and in the end there was a fairness and equity argument that had to be brought, and I voted for it.

Interestingly enough, Congress is now faced by my concerns. At a time of war, at a time when certain outlays inside Defense are critical for the safety and security of our men and women in uniform out there on the line, concurrent receipt is competing for resources, albeit in a secondary way. Ultimately, we will get a very large part of it, but I cannot predict how much. Congress made the commitment. We are obligated to that. But I tell veterans in Idaho not to expect full funding in the



John Hargraves

near future, based on where we are with the Defense budget at the moment.

Q: *What role do you see private contractors playing in the delivery of VA health care?*

A: I've never been opposed to private contracting in the right context. There are areas where savings can be made. But I approach it with caution because I know there are unique and specialized talents that deserve to be treated in-house. I don't think you do it summarily; I don't think it becomes the standard. We need to have the selectivity to use it where we know we can get a service that doesn't impair quality or delivery.

Q: *How do you view the movement to allow VA to bill Medicare for reimbursement?*

A: I have supported it in the past as a means for a veteran who does not have a service-connected relationship to gain access to VA health care. At the same time, there is a reasonably healthy debate inside Congress. Some see it as a way to cut VA's budget. I don't see it that way. I see it as an access issue. I'm not at all unwilling to revisit it, looking at it as a useful tool.

Q: *President Bush is seeking a \$250 enrollment fee for some veterans and wants to double the co-pay for prescription drugs. What is your view?*

A: Obviously, all the veterans service organizations suggest this is a non-starter, and my guess is that a majority of Congress views that as the same. At the same time, I want to keep it in the context of cost and need – dollars and cents. I must tell you, \$7 co-pay for a monthly prescription of drugs that can be hundreds of dollars is a heck of a deal. I need to get honest about that, and so do veterans. There are some veterans who cannot afford it, and there are many who can – and still view it as a very good deal. Just to summarily walk past that as a non-starter I can't do. But I'm willing to look at it in the context of the whole.

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Q: *What do you hope to accomplish in this Congress?*

A: I would like members of Congress to say, "My goodness, the veterans committee has grown active, doing the kind of homework and oversight in programs that it needs to do for our veterans." I'd like to see a seamless transition from active duty to veteran. I'd like to see a one-stop shop for survivors to access benefits available to them in a timely fashion. When the dust settles on the 109th Congress, I would hope that veterans look back and say, "Yes, Congress did hear us and was consistent in its support of us and our programs." 🌿

Veterans most capable of sharing in the cost of their care

- Priority Groups 7 and 8 represented 14 percent and 17 percent of VA health-care enrollment in 2004, respectively, but those groups used only 5 percent and 6 percent of VA resources that year.
- VA suspended new Group 8 enrollment due to lack of funding and long waiting lines.

- Eighty-eight percent of veterans in Groups 7 and 8 had some type of health-insurance coverage.
- Fifty-six percent of all veterans – and 65 percent of veterans in Groups 7 and 8 – are eligible for Medicare Part A. However, VA remains unable to bill Medicare Part A for reimbursement.

'We need to raise the bar.'

The American Legion Magazine: *Is the proposed 2006 budget for VA adequate?*

Sen. Daniel K. Akaka: No, the budget is not adequate. It provides too few dollars to properly care for the needs of America's veterans. My leadership role on the committee may be a new one, but I am not new to the committee or its mission. The 2006 VA budget places too great a burden on veterans. It's not right to require veterans to pay \$250 to get access to health care that they earned through honorable military service. It's not right to double their co-pay for prescription medicines to \$15. And it's not right to deny health-care access to veterans. President Bush talks about providing health care to veterans, but the money he provides in his budget falls terribly short of what is needed to back up his words.

If we don't work together to provide adequate appropriations, the shortfall is going to get worse. We are at war in Iraq and in Afghanistan. The president has told us that the war on terror will not be won overnight. Every day, military men and women are returning home in need of medical care for physical as well as psychological wounds. Ultimately, many will seek VA care. The influx places even greater pressure on already-overwhelmed VA facilities and staff. Our job in Congress is to try to give VA the resources it needs to meet its obligations to veterans. The president's 2006 budget falls short.

Q: *Is there a danger that the quality of VA health care will suffer if shortfalls continue?*

A: The problem is not care but rather access. VA provides some of the finest health care in the world. Few could find fault with that assessment. Shortfalls in appropriations do not lessen the quality of care. They limit access. Contrary to the intent of the Veterans Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996, the president's budget limits eligibility of who can receive VA services. Instead of opening its doors to those who seek care now and who might seek care in the future, VA would turn away entire categories of veterans because it would not have the money needed to meet its obligation to veterans. If the trend continues, fewer and fewer veterans will

Daniel K. Akaka was first elected to Congress in 1976 to represent Hawaii's Second Congressional District. He was elected to the Senate in 1990. The first U.S. senator of native Hawaiian ancestry, he is a World War II veteran of the Army Corps of Engineers.



John Harrington

be able to count on VA for their health care. America is not doing a very good job fulfilling its promise to veterans when it comes to VA health care.

Q: *How do you respond to the call to make VA health care a mandatory appropriation?*

A: I look at mandatory funding as something that is needed. I've been on the committee for many years, and it has always been my belief that veterans should not simply accept whatever the discretionary budget provides to them from year to year. Congress should appropriate the money VA needs to care for veterans. Over the years, the number of veterans seeking VA health care has increased at such a rate that VA does not have the resources to meet the demand. Today, 190,000 eligible veterans across the nation have been turned away. In Hawaii, my home state, more than 500 veterans have been told to go elsewhere. That's terrible, and we cannot continue in this manner from year to year.

Q: What do you consider the greatest hurdle in fulfilling the committee's commitment to veterans?

A: Obviously, the biggest challenge is money. It's our obligation to try to convince appropriators that there should be an increase in funding for veterans. We need the help of the entire country in this effort. Members of veterans organizations such as The American Legion can play an important role by reminding their members of Congress that the Health Care Eligibility Reform Act opened VA's doors to all veterans and that VA needs the resources to carry out that mandate.

Q: By the end of the 109th Congress what do you hope the committee will have achieved?

A: Quite simply, we need to raise the bar. More money is needed – \$3 billion more than the president is asking – to meet current needs and expand needed programs. Short of that, it is important we set priorities to best serve the needs of veterans with the money we ultimately get. I would certainly hope we have brought more money to the table. It's evident to me the president's budget is inadequate. The committee and Congress must find a way to come up with adequate appropriations to sustain care for our nation's veterans today and tomorrow. They deserve it, and it's the right thing to do. 🌿

– Interviews by James V. Carroll

U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs

Republicans

Larry Craig, Idaho, *Chairman*
Arlen Specter, Pa.
Kay Bailey Hutchison, Texas
Lindsey Graham, S.C.
Richard Burr, N.C.
John Ensign, Nev.
John Thune, S.D.
Johnny Isakson, Ga.

Democrats

Daniel Akaka, Hawaii
Ranking Member
Jay Rockefeller, W.Va.
Patty Murray, Wash.
Barack Obama, Ill.
Ken Salazar, Colo.

Independent

Jim Jeffords, Vt.

A Matter of Priority Groups: Veterans in greatest need get help first

Priority groups for VA health care were established in 1996. Contrary to remarks that suggest healthy veterans are pushing disabled veterans out of the way for services, VA's Web site (va.gov) states that, "Since funds are limited, VA set up priority groups to make sure that certain groups of veterans are able to be enrolled before others." Most veterans make co-payments and use medical insurance policies for VA care. However, VA has been slow to install an effective insurance collections practice, receiving only about 40 cents on the dollar, a problem veterans have been asked to solve in 2006 through doubled prescription co-payments (opposed by a majority of members in the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees) and new enrollment fees. The priority groups for VA health care are as follows:

Priority Group 1

Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 50 percent or greater.

Priority Group 2

Veterans with service-connected disability ratings 30 percent or 40 percent.

Priority Group 3

Former prisoners of war, Purple Heart recipients, veterans discharged due to service-connected disability, those with service-connected disability ratings 10 percent or 20 percent and those disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation.

Priority Group 4

Veterans who are receiving aid and attendance benefits or are housebound and veterans who are determined by VA to be catastrophically disabled.

Priority Group 5

Veterans living below established means-test thresholds and veterans receiving VA pension benefits and those who are eligible for Medicaid.

Priority Group 6

Veterans of World War I, the Mexican Border War, those seeking care for disorders linked to exposure in the line of duty to chemical, nuclear or biological agents and veterans with compensable service-connected disabilities rated 0 percent.

Priority Group 7

Veterans with net worth above a VA means-test threshold and below a geographic index defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Priority Group 8

Veterans with net worth above the VA means test threshold and the HUD geographic index. Priority Group 8 was created in October 2002. Three months later, all new enrollment into Group 8 was suspended, due to a lack of funding.

'This is more than a budget issue.'

The American Legion Magazine: *At a time of war, when other federal programs face cuts, why can't VA tighten its belt?*

Thomas P. Cadmus: VA is always on a wartime budget. More than 10,000 men and women who have served in the war on terrorism have already entered the VA system, joining those who came home from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War and other actions. They all are joined now and will be in years ahead. Compassionate care for them is a delayed cost of war, regardless of its era. The president says the global war on terrorism could go on for years. I believe him. Today's war only amplifies America's need to properly fund the VA health-care system.



James V. Carroll

Q: *Why doesn't Congress just make a law to assure adequate funding of VA health care?*

A: Some lawmakers don't like to answer that question. Others won't. The bottom line is that veterans have been moved to a lower place on the federal government's priority list, and VA health care represents one very large pile of discretionary tax dollars that can be squeezed to pay for pork-barrel projects, send billions overseas in foreign aid, and to educate and medicate illegal immigrants. Dozens of federal programs and projects compete for VA health-care dollars because they are discretionary. Members of Congress want to keep those funds accessible, especially when veterans are not considered a high priority.

Q: *Do you have any recent examples of this shift?*

A: Just last March, the House rejected from an emergency spending bill adding \$1.3 billion in badly needed funds to care for newly discharged veterans from the war on terrorism. And this year's VA budget proposal from the president, if passed, wouldn't even keep up with inflation, let alone patient needs. The 2006 proposal calls for a 2.4-percent increase with more money than ever coming straight from veterans' pockets, in enroll-

ment fees and double co-payments. In the end, it's a net-loss budget at a time of growing demand. A Pentagon official went so far as to say earlier this year that the cost of veterans' health care is "hurtful" to the war effort. The pressure is on. They are looking squarely at veterans.

Q: *What happens when too few dollars are available for VA health care?*

A: Veterans' needs are thrown into competition with other federal programs. Even worse, different groups of veterans are set up to battle each other over scarce federal appropriations.

A young, newly discharged Operation Iraqi Freedom infantryman can come home after having fought in dozens of bloody firefights. He might seem just fine when he comes out – no service-connected disability rating – but three years later find himself unable to see a VA doctor in a timely manner to find out if he has PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder). He would be a Priority

Group 8. He could not simply get on the phone and make an appointment with a VA doctor, who is best-qualified to diagnose PTSD. Then there's the question of the soldier who survives deadly combat in Iraq, who two years after discharge is ineligible for VA because he's become a Group 8, versus the private who blows a knee a week into boot camp and has a Group 3 rating. Don't they both deserve VA health care? When there are too few dollars, veterans get divided and subdivided into all different categories and priority groups. All veterans deserve the best. The priority group system was set up to make sure veterans in most serious need of care get treated first. It was not set up for the government to lop off whatever priority group it doesn't want to pay for. If VA health-care funding were mandatory, instead of discretionary, the dollars would match demand.

Q: *Who are the Priority Group 8 veterans and why can't VA care for all of them?*

A: Priority Group 8s are those who have no service-connected disability and higher incomes than other veterans. They might make just over \$26,000 a year, or \$31,000 with a dependent, but they are considered "high income." In January 2003, VA

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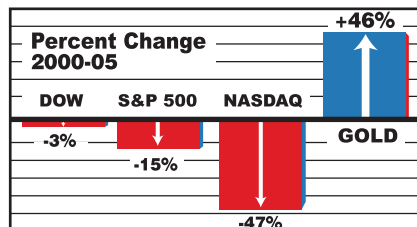
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suspended new enrollment for Priority Group 8s. Those who were in at that time were in. Those who came later were out. So, you ended up with the two veterans who live across the street from each other, each of whom served his or her country honorably when duty called, came home unhurt, received an education, raised a family, paid taxes and contributed to the economy. One gets high-quality, affordable health care at VA because that veteran enrolled before January 2003. The other is squeezed out, due to inadequate funding. This is especially puzzling when VA can bill any health-insurance company the Group 8 veteran may have, but not Medicare.

Q: *Shouldn't VA concentrate on a "core constituency" of indigent and combat-wounded veterans?*

A: Where is the term "core constituency" found in law? A veteran, as defined by U.S. Code, is "a person who served in the active military, naval or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable." There is no core constituency, no hierarchy. A veteran is a veteran. Is Congress going to decide who, among those who swore with their lives to defend our nation, should receive VA care and who should not? The term "core constituency" is a political invention.

Q: *What happened to the Veterans Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996?*

A: For VA to fulfill the intentions of the eligibility reform act – which not only invited veterans but marketed to them to enroll in the system – it must receive mandatory funding. That's the problem. The President's Task Force to Improve Health Care Delivery for our Nation's Veterans identified it with crystal clarity. Funds do not match demand. The American Legion's "I Am Not a Number" project identified thousands of veterans waiting months to see their doctors because the system lacked funding. As the number of veterans in the system grew, VA health-care funding did not keep up. Congress had other priorities. Lines grew. The problem became public, and to solve it, they just closed the door on Group 8s. Now, they are looking at Group 7s. Eventually, the so-called core constituency will shrink to the point where there's no other choice but to out-source the whole thing.

The only way to assure real dollars match real costs is to fund it just like Social Security and Medicare. Funds would be appropriated on a cost-per-veteran basis, indexed annually for inflation, giving VA the ability to bill Medicare.

Q: *Isn't VA supposed to receive a budget increase in fiscal 2006?*

A: There's a big difference between the terms "budget" and "appropriation." In the current recommendation, actual spending is flatlined. However, they can say it's a budget increase because VA counts the money it will demand from the pockets of veterans and increased insurance collections, as well as assumed savings from proposed "management efficiencies." VA has improved its ability to collect from insurance companies, but in 2004, it did not meet third-party collection goals and yet was given a greatly increased goal for this year. When they chose to suspend new enrollment of Priority Group 8 veterans – those most likely to have insurance – they shot themselves in the foot. The population of veterans most capable of contributing to their own health-care costs were denied access.

Q: *What about the \$3 billion in uncollected medical bills owed to VA?*

A: VA needs to collect it. If that money were owed to the IRS, you can be sure it would be collected. If Ford Motor Co. were owed \$3 billion, you can bet it would be collected. If, in fact, VA is collecting only 40 cents on every dollar billed to insurance companies, that is not the veteran's problem. VA has had nearly a decade to perfect its ability to collect bills. The highest officials in VA should be all over this. Congress also has oversight committees that are supposed to be tracking these kinds of problems. If that \$3 billion were collected, VA would not be facing a shortfall in the 2006 budget proposal. If VA could solve its collections problem, then Washington would not need veterans to pay new enrollment fees for VA health care. Collections from insurance companies – including Medicare Part B – must become a higher priority. Furthermore, VA should be free to bill Medicare Part A for qualified veterans. Those veterans and their employers pay into Medicare all their lives. It is America's biggest insurance plan. Indian Health Services, which is also a federal program, does just fine billing and collecting from Medicare. VA should be afforded the same opportunity.

Q: *With fewer high-income veterans, how does VA expect to make up for lost revenue?*

A: According to proposals now on the table, veterans will be told to dig deeper into their own pockets. Annual enrollment fees of up to \$500 per veteran and double prescription co-payments are good examples of what is now proposed – and what has been proposed before. I know a veteran

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John Edmiston (Reporter)

The Wall Street Journal, June 9, 2004

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who has 10 different prescriptions. Ask him what it means to have his co-payment go from \$7 to \$15 each, on a fixed income. He won't be able to afford all the medicine he needs, and so he will go without. The current budget proposal estimates that these changes will drive 1.1 million veterans out of VA. Fortunately, the majority of members of the House and Senate veterans affairs committees have rejected the proposed increase in prescription co-payments.

Q: *How has VA prepared for the expected demand increase for nursing home care?*

A: Poorly. And this is a great example of how Congress will pass bills and create laws that aim to help veterans and then fail to pick up the tab. The Mill Bill (Veterans Millennium Health Care Act of 1999) called on VA to maintain its number of available nursing-home beds at 1998 levels – somewhere around 13,000. Guess what? The number of VA-staffed nursing-home beds has continued to decline, as if no law at all had been passed. They didn't even break stride. They just chose not to pay for it. In the meantime, VA has shifted long-term health care into the private sector and onto the shoulders of the states. States have agreed to willingly share in the cost of long-term care for veterans who the federal government put in harm's way. Now, in the name of fiscal austerity, the president proposes to stop paying for all but the most catastrophic cases. The long-term care needs of veterans were not even factored into the CARES (Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services) assessment, the biggest facilities overhaul ever in VA.

VA may choose a private nursing home on the basis of cost or availability, leaving the veteran who wrestles with nightmares of the Bataan death march, or the men who never really made it home from the Ia Drang Valley, in the care of someone who thinks burning the flag is a reasonable expression of free speech.

State veterans homes do a wonderful job. Even the Republican leadership in the congressional veterans affairs committees agree that VA should happily keep paying the affordable \$59 a day for each VA resident in state long-term care. But a time may come when states tell VA, 'Hey, we can't afford this anymore.' VA, which has become dependent on states for long-term care, will have no place to turn.

Q: *Are you advocating free lifetime care for veterans?*

A: Veterans pay for their VA benefits – for which there are distinct eligibility criteria – by honorably

serving in the armed forces. That is why you don't see the term "core constituency" in U.S. Code. We all stood together, without priority groups, when we entered and served in the military. We stand together now. You might have wanted to be a drill instructor or a computer technician, but you go where they say to go, and sometimes that's the warfront. Everyone in the service faces that risk, and everyone who survives it with honor deserves the benefit of quality care. Veterans have paid for VA care for generations, over and over.

Really, only a few sets of veterans receive a full continuum of free health care from VA – those with service-connected disabilities, former POWs and those who are poverty-stricken. All other veterans pay, through their insurance policies and co-payments. And now, those paying veterans are being blamed for VA's inability to collect bills and for the federal government's unwillingness to cover the actual costs of providing care.

It's an ageless problem, one that Rudyard Kipling so perceptively described in his great poem "Tommy": "For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, and 'Chuck him out, the brute!' But it's savior of his country when the guns begin to shoot ..."

The only twist on today's version is that the guns are still shooting in Iraq, and Tommy is already getting chucked out by this VA budget proposal. Veterans are not numbers. They are not core constituencies. They deserve honor and respect, not blame, budget cuts and shell games designed to drive them away.

If they have never contacted a member of Congress for any other reason, veterans need to make that call now. The number is in the blue pages of any phone book. Veterans across the country need to alert their local media and community leaders. A freedom-loving public never complains about fulfilling America's moral obligation to "care for him who shall have borne the battle." And certainly no one in a federal government so willing to send young men and women to battle today should be retreating from its obligation to veterans – not now, not ever. This is more than a budget issue. This is a life-and-death issue. Veterans must rally together, get their local communities onboard, and demand the federal government live up to its moral obligation. We cannot, and will not, sit quietly and watch one budget-driven congressional session unravel VA's true purpose. We have come too far together to let other fiscal priorities abort the mission we all share. 🌿

Article design: Holly K. Soria

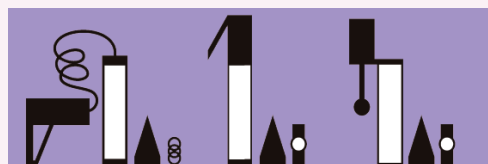


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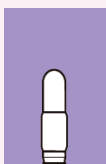
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Men in Black



Courtesy Mark Levin

Justices subvert democracy, says author Mark Levin.

For more than two centuries, Americans have accepted the U.S. Supreme Court as the final arbiter of all that is constitutional and legal in the United States. Now, with his best-selling book, “Men in Black: How the Supreme Court is Destroying America,” commentator Mark Levin has become a splinter on the bench of appointed-for-life justices. A chief of staff to former U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese, Levin graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Temple University at age 19. He later graduated from Temple University Law School and today heads the Landmark Legal Foundation and hosts New York’s top-rated radio program, on WABC. He recently discussed the Supreme Court with *The American Legion Magazine*.

The American Legion Magazine: The subtitle of your book is “How the Supreme Court is Destroying America.” Why do you believe this?

Mark Levin: The Supreme Court is destroying America because it is undermining the Constitution. It is undermining our system of government, it is undermining representative government, and it is disenfranchising the American people. Now, what do I mean by this? The Court no longer sees its role as limited to applying and interpreting the Constitution. The justices on the Court view their role as promoting a particular policy point of view. That is utterly lawless. It is a complete break from what the framers intended, and the result is, in many areas, chaos and the radicalization of our culture. So we have the Court ruling last summer that terrorists have certain due-process rights. We let the Court confer benefits on illegal aliens. We have lower courts taking over prison systems and school systems, raising taxes. In fact, I can’t think of any area in life in which the Court isn’t dictating policy. If the president of the United States were to announce today, “I will make the final decisions of what the law is, of what policy is in this country. I will decide if what the Supreme Court is doing is correct. I will decide if what Congress is doing is correct. I will decide if what the state legislatures is doing is correct,” we all would say, “He has lost his mind. He better be impeached.” But if the Court

does that without any authority whatsoever in the Constitution, for some reason we all bow and say, “Well, that’s great. These people know what they’re doing.” That’s what I mean.

Q: How does the Court justify usurping authority from the other branches?

A: It first occurred in 1803 in a famous decision called *Marbury v. Madison*. Back then, the Court decided it would have the final say on what is or is not constitutional. Thomas Jefferson was one of the most outspoken critics of this decision. He called it despotism of an oligarchy, and he was right. There is simply no constitutional authority for this position. The Court can obviously take a whack at what it thinks is or is not constitutional. But the other branches have power, too. They can make decisions, too. Not a single framer of the constitutional convention in Philadelphia and not a single framer in any of the state ratifying conventions argued for a court that would have the final say on all constitutional legal matters. Not one. The Constitution doesn’t provide the Court with that authority either. When we have justices on the Court now who won’t even look at the Constitution, who are willing to go outside the country, overseas, and to use foreign law and foreign court decisions to guide them on how they’re going to rule, that is a brazen usurpation of their constitutional power.



Q: *Almost all would agree that the Dred Scott decision was a bad one, but it was decided when slavery was still legal in some states and the 14th Amendment did not yet exist. You say that this was an “activist” decision. Are all bad decisions “activist” decisions?*

A: All the major ones. If you look at *Dred Scott* in 1856, it said slaves are property. I read my Constitution; it doesn't say that in the Fifth Amendment. In fact, that Court went so far as to not only uphold slavery, but Congress had passed the Missouri Compromise, which meant that the new territories would remain free, and the Court said no – slavery was the law of the land. That was an activist court. In 1896 an activist court ruled that “separate but equal was equal” in the *Plessy* case. That's not what the 14th Amendment equal-protection clause says. In 1944, the Court ruled that the rounding up of 110,000 U.S. citizens, most of whom were Japanese, without a scintilla of evidence of wrong-doing by any of them – I don't give FDR a pass on this – that this was constitutional and the Court could barely explain how. If that is not a violation of due process, I don't know what is. And in 1973, from my point of view, the Court's ruling in *Roe v. Wade* is another outrage. Without any constitutional basis whatsoever, the Court imposed abortion on demand on the entire nation, even in those states that didn't want it. Those are the four great issues in our history: slavery, segregation, due process and abortion, and the Court was wrong on all of them.

Q: *What justification does the Court use to decide that flag burning and pornography are free speech, yet prayer and religious symbols are not?*

A: You cannot make a rational or logical analysis of that. It just doesn't exist. This is what happens when the law ceases to be the law, and the views of individuals become the law. You have the Court upholding cyberspace child pornography as constitutionally protected, but running certain broadcast ads prior to a federal

election is not protected. You have the Court holding that protesting within 100 feet of an abortion clinic is not protected speech, but if you are a Nazi and want to march in a predominantly Jewish neighborhood, it is protected. You have the Court deciding that flag burning is protected speech. On what basis? On what basis do they distinguish any of these cases? They really don't. They try, but they don't. The First Amendment jurisprudence is a complete mess.

Q: *How has Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Baptists been distorted?*

A: That letter to the Danbury Baptists, in which he talks about the separation between church and state, was written 14 years after the adoption of the Bill of Rights and the First Amendment. In fact, it has absolutely nothing to do with the First Amendment. Jefferson had nothing to do with the Bill of Rights; he was in France at the time. It's very odd that the left would rely on him as justification for their rather radical position when it comes to religion in the public square. The real source of this strict wall of separation language wasn't Jefferson. It was Hugo Black, a justice appointed by FDR. Prior to being a justice, he was a senator from Alabama. And when he was

preparing to run for the Senate in Alabama, he joined the Ku Klux Klan, a very powerful force back in the 1920s. In fact, he was noteworthy for representing some of its most violent members, including a Klansman accused of murdering a Catholic priest. So in 1947, he was the

justice who wrote an opinion in a case called *Everson*, involving whether or not public transportation could be used to drop off and pick up Catholic schoolchildren. Although the Court ruled that it could, he slipped language into the decision talking about “a strict wall of separation between

“When we have justices on the Court now who won't even look at the Constitution, who are willing to go outside the country, overseas, and to use foreign law and foreign court decisions to guide them on how they're going to rule, that is a brazen usurpation of their constitutional power.”

church and state” – that’s the slippery-slope law today, where the Court can’t even muster five votes to uphold the Pledge of Allegiance, where the ACLU is terrorizing the country in village after village, township after township, city after city, trying to ban any remnant of any religious viewpoint from the public square. They really aren’t quoting Jefferson. They are quoting a former Klansman with their “separation of church and state” phrase.

Q: *You suggest giving the Congress veto power over the Supreme Court. Can you expand on this?*

A: The framers gave Congress the power to override a presidential veto when it comes to legislative matters because they were concerned the president would be too powerful, and they wanted the public to have a robust role in their government through their elected representatives. I think the same should apply to the Supreme Court. The three branches are out of balance right now, with the judiciary being obviously the most powerful. It decides what is or what is not the law of the land. It decides policy for this country. So what I propose – and it would take a lot of work and debate to get there, but you have to start somewhere – is an amendment to the Constitution that would give Congress a two-thirds supermajority vote for both houses to override a Supreme Court decision – like the flag-burning decision, as an example, where the Court is way out of touch with the American people, and its decision is not based on the Constitution, and so the public has an outlet to have the final say. This is not tyranny of the majority. It’s not mob-ocracy. The same structure is in place – the Congress, which is representative government – a two-thirds vote is not easy to get ... (this would be) a tool for the American people to have when the courts are way out of sync with the American people.

Q: *What else can the American people do about the courts?*

A: Well, there is one other amendment that I would like to see. It would be for all federal judges, including Supreme Court justices, to serve one 12-year term (each) and then get off the bench. If they are going to legislate and act like politicians, they don’t need to serve for life. We’re talking about approximately 1,000 individuals who run the federal judiciary of a country of about 300 million people. I have no problem with, over a period of time, moving them on to another career and bringing in other people. These positions have become way too powerful for people to serve 30 or

40 years, in my view. The other thing is that the Constitution itself empowers Congress to set up the lower courts, to establish them, to set up what their authority and jurisdiction is going to be. It also gives Congress the power, in many respects, to determine the Supreme Court’s jurisdiction. Early in our history, Congress used to do this. Congress would change the make-up of the lower courts and what the lower courts would actually do. Congress would change the membership of the Supreme Court. It doesn’t do it anymore. It should. It is a legitimate constitutional power. It is right there in the Constitution. I know that we’ll hear from the left about the “independence of the judiciary.” But what about the Constitution? Of course, the judiciary is to be independent in the sense that judges are to make the decisions by applying the Constitution. We want them to do that. But Congress also has the power to determine in many ways what that third branch of government is going to look like. It ought to exercise that power from time to time. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals is the perfect example. It’s way left. It’s way out of the mainstream of American thought. It does not, in many instances, follow the Constitution. It’s overturned all of the time, even by this Supreme Court. So they ought to break up that circuit, move the chess pieces around, and Congress should take some responsibility.

Q: *Who is, or would make, a model Supreme Court justice?*

A: I am a great fan of Clarence Thomas. He writes some of the most persuasive and historic-based decisions one could ever read. I obviously think Antonin Scalia is a terrific justice. I think Chief Justice (William) Rehnquist has been an outstanding public servant, has tried his very best to fulfill his role properly as a justice, and has shown respect and fidelity to the Constitution. There are many on the circuit courts who do the same thing, day after day: Michael Ludig, Michael McConnell, Sam Alito. In the California Court you have Janice Brown, Edith Jones in Texas. I can go on and on. There are a number of judges and lawyers who could make outstanding members of the Supreme Court.

Q: *Given your candor, do you ever expect to be confirmed by the Senate for anything?*

A: No, I want nothing to do with them. Believe me. 🍷

Interview: John Raughter

Article design: Doug Rollison

Medicare Covers Erectile Dysfunction Correction

Nothing impacts the sexual health and well-being of a couple and their intimate relationship more than Erectile Dysfunction (ED). Therefore, any treatment used must address the needs of both people involved.

The male erection involves a very complicated interaction of many of the body's systems.

The natural erection process can be interrupted by many underlying disease states and/or conditions.

The most common underlying causes of Erectile Dysfunction are: Diabetes, Hypertension, Vascular Disease, and Drug Interaction.

For many, the first-choice of treatment for ED should be Vacuum Therapy.

Unlike drugs, pills, or injections, Vacuum Therapy is non-invasive and has no side-effects.

Negative pressure mimics the body's natural function and produces an almost instant erection.

This uniquely simple technology uses the body's blood to create erection much in the way the natural process works and maintains erection for sexual intercourse. The big difference is with Vacuum Therapy you control erection – with drug treatments the drug controls erection – not you.

In fact, Vacuum Therapy is predictable, reliable, and gives spontaneous results other treatments simply cannot claim. You and your partner will be able to control when, where and how long you want to be intimate.

Vacuum Therapy is also the only treatment that provides a significant therapeutic benefit while also creating functional erection.

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That means little, if any out of pocket expense to you! **Call Discount Diabetic to order at 1-800-771-7032.**

Vacuum Therapy Systems are safe, simple, effective, reliable, predictable, spontaneous and produces an almost "Instant Erection".

Each system includes an instructional manual, instructional video, pump head, cylinder, cylinder sizing inserts, loading cone, tension systems, personal lubricant, carrying case and LIFETIME MANUFACTURER WARRANTY.

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Advertisement

Diabetes Healing Secret

Here's important news for anyone with diabetes. A remarkable book is now available that reveals medically tested principles that can help normalize blood sugar naturally ...and greatly improve the complications associated with diabetes. People report **better vision, more energy, faster healing, regained feeling in their feet**, as well as a reduction of various risk factors associated with other diseases.

It's called "*How to Reverse Diabetes*" and it was researched, developed and written by a leading nutrition specialist. It shows you exactly how nature can activate your body's built-in healers once you start eating the right combination of foods. It can work for both Type I and Type II diabetes and people report it has helped reduce their insulin resistance. It can give diabetics control of their lives and a feeling of satisfaction that comes from having normal blood sugar profiles.

The results speak for themselves. "*How to Reverse Diabetes*" is based on research that many doctors may not be aware of yet. It tells you which delicious foods to eat and which to avoid. It also

warns you of the potential danger of certain so-called "diabetes" diets. Diabetics are calling this program "very outstanding"... "a tremendous help"... and saying it made "a difference in my life." "*How to Reverse Diabetes*" is based on documented scientific principles that can help:

- **Eliminate ketones and give you more abundant energy**
- **Make blood sugar levels go from High Risk to Normal**
- **Stimulate scratches and scrapes to heal faster**
- **Improve eyesight**
- **Improve your balance**
- **Help numb feet regain a level of feeling**
- **Reverse neuropathy and resultant heel ulcers**

Improvement may be seen in other areas as well, such as **lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol and reduced triglyceride levels**. There may also be a reduction of other risk factors associated with: **heart attacks, stroke, retinopathy, kidney damage**.

What's more, it may help improve **short term memory** and make you feel **more alert and no longer chronically**

tired. Improvements of **double vision** or *diplopia* may also be experienced.

If you or someone you know have diabetes, this could be the most important book you'll ever read. As part of a special introductory offer, right now you can order a special press run of "*How to Reverse Diabetes*" for only \$12.95 plus \$2.00 shipping. It comes with a 90 day money back guarantee. If you are not 100% satisfied, simply return it for a full refund...no questions asked.

Order an extra copy for family or friend and SAVE. You can order 2 for only \$20 total.

HERE'S HOW TO ORDER:

Simply PRINT your name and address and the words "Reverse Diabetes" on a piece of paper and mail it along with a check or money order to: Diabetes Health Publishers, Dept. DR269, P.O. Box 8347, Canton, OH 44711. VISA or MasterCard send card number and expiration date. Act now. Orders are fulfilled on a first come, first served basis.



National Commander
Thomas P. Cadmus:
'I have fire in the belly.'

Photos by James V. Carroll

Legion says no to enrollment fees, co-pay increases

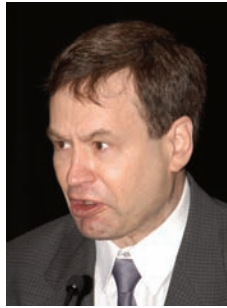
VA health care takes center stage at Washington Conference.

BY JOHN RAUGHTER

National Commander Thomas P. Cadmus strongly rebuked congressional and administration attempts to impose enrollment fees at VA, as veterans health-care issues dominated discussions at the 45th annual American Legion Legislative Conference in Washington, Feb. 27 to March 2.

"I don't know how you all feel, but I have fire in the belly," Cadmus told a packed ballroom full of Legionnaires, Auxiliary members and Sons of The American Legion. "We do not support the president's VA budget. We say no to an enrollment fee, and we say no to doubling prescription co-pays."

Rep. Lane Evans, D-Ill., painted a grim picture of what Washington leaders are attempting to do to veterans health care. "This administration has handed the Congress a budget request that calls for enrollment fees, increased co-payments and what will amount to devastating cuts in veterans programs," Evans, the ranking member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, said at the legislative rally. "They want to discourage more veterans from using the system. At the height of a war, that is not only wrong, it is shameful."



Evans: 'It is shameful.'

Defending the enrollment fees was the new chairman of the committee, Rep. Steve Buyer, R-Ind. "You should go to the Hill and when you talk to your members of Congress and the Senate, you should embrace the enrollment fee," Buyer said, suggesting fees as high as \$500 for some veterans. "Because when you embrace the enrollment fee what you are saying is, 'I want to gain access to a good system and am willing to pay for access to a good system.'"

While the Legion has long agreed with Buyer that it is a good system – in fact, a system worth saving – Buyer's speech seemed to take a divisive tone in which he attempted to pit disabled veterans against healthier ones and also lamented \$3 billion of uncollected VA debt. "If you say no to an enrollment fee, what you are trying to say is, 'I reject the embracing of the disabled. I reject the embracing of those with special needs.' You are saying, 'I reject the poor. Treat me the same as them. Put me ahead of the line.'"

National Adjutant Robert W. Spanogle later reminded Legionnaires that it has never been The American Legion's position to treat nondisabled veterans ahead of their disabled brethren. "I can't think of anyone in this room or any veteran who would stand to receive care ahead of someone who is in a wheelchair. Then you hear on the enrollment fee that VA has not collected \$3 billion in third-party reimbursements – somehow that came to be 'we got a problem.' I don't think we got a problem. I think VA has a problem."

"VA is saying, 'Since we are not collecting from insurance companies, we want



Spanogle: 'I think VA has a problem.'

to charge you an enrollment fee,'" Spanogle added. "Nine veterans organizations don't agree with that, and the Presidential Task Force (to Improve Health Care Delivery for our Nation's Veterans) doesn't agree with it."

Evans told the Legion that VA should serve all veterans. "When I enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, I didn't sign up for a priority group. I signed up to defend this country. I am sure that all of you here today feel the same. We must reject this attempt to divide and conquer the veterans community."

Buyer, a colonel in the Army Reserve, recited a long list of his legislative accomplishments before addressing his controversial proposals. "Not only was I very active in pay raises for our soldiers, I even changed the pay tables. They said it couldn't be done. It took me three years to do the redesign for the military health delivery and pharmacy system. I improved housing allowances. I removed restrictions on subsistence allowance for enlisted members. I improved the National Guard structure to respond to weapons of mass destruction in the lines of emergencies. I



Buyer: 'I am involved in your life.'

authorized concurrent receipt for the first time when I was chairman of the personnel committee. If that's not an applause line I don't know what is," he said, prompting a polite reception from the crowd. Buyer continued with the lengthy list, adding that he created TRICARE for Life for military retirees older than 65.

"I prohibited the Army from reducing the staff of its Central Identification lab in Hawaii to assure the continued level of efforts to recover MIA remains from Vietnam and the Korean peninsula. I also required a comprehensive exit survey of those leaving the military ... Oh the list, I'm tired of the list," Buyer said, shaking some papers. "To give you an idea, I am involved in your life."

A lawmaker renowned for his longtime involvement in veterans issues, Rep. Michael Bilirakis, R-Fla., also spoke at the rally and was given the Legion's Distinguished Public Service Award.

"I oftentimes hear my colleagues, I am ashamed to say to you, ask why these men and women should receive special health care or other benefits. My answer is very simple. They have earned the benefits they receive through their service," Bilirakis said. "We have a word up here called entitlements. You are entitled to something just

because you reach a certain age, you're entitled to something because you are poor or unfortunately become ill. You are entitled to this or that. But veterans are entitled because of what they accomplished and have given to this country. That is the one primary true entitlement."

Medicare, a major federal entitlement, is still not welcome at VA, Cadmus pointed out. "Today nearly 90 percent of federal health-care spending receives mandatory funding to the tune of nearly \$500 billion. Once the Medicare prescription plan is fully implemented, that number will continue to soar. Clearly VA is still the federal government's biggest bang for the buck. That is why The American Legion and nine other veterans service organizations believe VA should receive mandatory funding. It only makes sense to fund VA based on health-care needs rather than budgetary whims.

"Unfortunately, VA is prohibited from collecting third-party reimbursements from Medicare for their treatment of nonservice-connected medical conditions," the national commander said. "Over half of VA's patient population is Medicare-eligible. Doesn't it seem smart to allow VA to collect from the nation's largest health insurer rather than charge the veteran a \$250 enrollment fee and doubling the prescription co-pay? They are not asking for free health care, just to spend their health-care dollars in a quality system that was created for them."

Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., added that Congress should not be "scraping for the bare minimum" but instead should be talking about a GI Bill for the 21st century. He used the opportunity to promote a proposal by Rep. Rahm Emanuel, D-Ill., that would increase veterans benefits. The bill, Obama said, "would allow returning vets to keep the quality of health care that they have in the military, double their education benefits and give them a \$5,000 down payment for a new home.

"Are we going to serve the man fighting in Fallujah as well when he returns home as he is serving us in Iraq?" Obama asked.

George Nesterchuk, a senior official with the Office of Personnel Management, told The American Legion's Economic Commission that



Bilirakis: 'Veterans are entitled.'

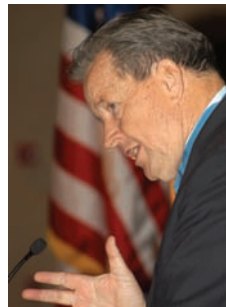
the federal government is committed to hiring veterans. "Veterans preference is a core value of federal employment, and OPM is committed to keeping it fairly applied. Preference is a privilege our veterans have earned, and we will make sure it is properly enforced."

The American Legion again pledged its unyielding commitment to restore to Congress the right to protect the U.S. Flag from desecration.

"We are trying to restore to Congress and the American people the right that was stripped from them by a 5-4 Supreme Court decision," Cadmus said. "Today, you represent 25 million American veterans, so please speak up loud and clear."

Medal of Honor recipient and Citizens Flag Alliance Chairman Patrick Brady, a retired Army major general, noted his disappointment in the U.S. Senate leadership. "After a great victory in the House last Congress, the Senate leadership failed to have a vote despite many promises to the Legion that there would be a vote," Brady said. "We need to use that broken promise as a hammer to win a vote in the Senate this time. Our No. 1 priority

must be to get a vote in the Senate."



Brady: 'Win a vote in the Senate.'

Brady recalled the 2004 election, which he said was about values. "Veterans make up about 13 percent of the population but in the last election made up 18 percent of the vote. I wonder if any other group matched that turnout," he said. "Mixed in with the war, the veteran status of the candidates and other issues

were values. Veterans and values determined victory. We have said over and over again that legalized flag burning is another domino in the devaluing of America."

Only one of the 49 new members of Congress has clearly stated opposition to the flag-protection amendment. The measure, which in the past has fallen just a few votes short of passage in the Senate, may have greater support since the election. Brady cited Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., as one who "told us last year that she would reconsider her opposition to the flag amendment."

Opposition to the flag-protection amendment is one of the issues believed to have cost former Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle his seat in a closely contested race in South Dakota last year. 🌿

John Raughter is the editor of The American Legion Magazine.



Obama: No 'scraping for the bare minimum.'



Senior NCOs from the different branches of the armed services address Legionnaires at the Washington Conference. *James V. Carroll*

Senior NCOs discuss troop welfare with Legion

Senior enlisted representatives from the U.S. Armed Forces discussed troop morale and readiness with members of The American Legion family during the 45th annual Washington Legislative Conference Feb. 27.

"One of the biggest concerns of soldiers is the grim news constantly reported by CNN and other media," said Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston. "You need to continue spreading the good news about the military, and there is plenty of it. Deployments are not necessarily bad, but they do have a cumulative effect on soldiers and their families. They must believe that it is worthwhile."

Preston said that while the Army recruited 107 percent of its goal last year, 2005 and 2006 are "tough, critical years."

Preston was joined on the panel by the Command Sergeant Major of the National Guard Bureau John Leonard, Marine Sgt. Maj. Frederico Perez Jr., Navy Force Master Chief Petty Officer Michael McCalip, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Gerald Murray and Coast Guard Master Chief Petty Officer Frank Jennings.

Leonard, who also represents the Air National Guard, said the Reserves and Guard are particularly challenged to recruit prior active-duty members – once a major resource for their members.

"Those leaving the service tend to not want to join the Reserve or Guard right away," he said. "We have not seen a reluctance of young people wanting to join, but we are keeping an eye on that because we are at war."

Perez added that the Marines fell 84 contracts short of their January recruiting goal. "That has a lot to do with increased op-temp and parents not eager to see their kids go into the Marine Corps."

Leonard said that while most Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans feel good about what they did overseas, they do not like what they see on television. The Legion can demonstrate their support for the veterans returning or currently fighting the war. "Please continue to adopt units," Leonard said. "Employer support is also needed. Sometimes companies had to downsize and that affects deployed Guard and Reservists."

The Air Force is surpassing recruiting expectations, Murray said. "We have doubled our recruiters since 1999," he said. "We are still affected in many ways by 9/11. After stop-loss, we expected to lose airmen. We didn't. Retention has been surging."

Jennings pointed out that with a population of 39,000, the U.S. Coast Guard is the size of the New York City Police Department. "We are a small service with a big job. We are at 101 percent of our strength, and that's because of our greatest recruiting tool: the performance of our Coast Guardsmen."

The NCOs welcomed initiatives such as the Legion's Troop Support Services program and its components, the Disabled Soldier Support Service program, Reconnect and the Family Support Network.

"Re-integration is more than just saying, 'Welcome back,'" Murray said. "Issues relating to war come back over years and decades. Keep doing what you're doing, and keep your voice on the Hill."

Good Samaritans

*U.S. soldiers aid
the oppressed and injured,
with no regard for the cost.*

BY THE REV. JEROME D. FORTENBERRY



Ensign Majid Awad plays with local Iraqi children in Najaf, Iraq. Awad and other Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 7 worked to build a school and improve village facilities. *DoD*

Whenever I am asked for my views on the war in Iraq, the first thing I think of is all those fine, young American men and women who are fighting to bring peace and democracy to that country and its people. The efforts of our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines, to my way of thinking, are a marvelous example of the “Good Samaritan.”

Let me recount the story as Jesus told it. He said the two greatest commandments were to love God with your whole heart, soul and mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself. A questioner, wishing to justify himself, asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?”

Jesus replied, “There was a Jew going down the road to Jericho who was set upon by thieves. They beat him, robbed him, and left him bleeding and dying by the road. In time, another Jew, a priest, saw him by the side of the road but did not stop to help. Later, another Jew, a Levite, saw the injured man but hurried by. Finally a Samaritan came upon him. He stopped and gave the man water, poured wine and oil into his wounds, bound them up and carried the man on his donkey to a nearby inn. The Samaritan paid the innkeeper to take care of the Jew and promised to return and pay any additional costs that were incurred.”

Jesus then asked who had been the “neighbor” to the injured man.

“Of course,” said the person who questioned Jesus, “it was the Samaritan.”

But who were the Samaritans? When the Jews were taken into captivity centuries before, some were left behind. In time, they abandoned Jewish customs and adopted foreign ones. When the captive Jews returned, they considered the Samaritans to be outcasts, bastard Jews, and they were hated by the faithful who had nothing to do with them.

Yet it was a Samaritan, not a “good” Jew, who had pity on the injured man and helped him even though his fellow Jews passed him by.

Which brings me to my point.

Saddam Hussein was a dictator who killed thousands of his own people. He invaded neighboring Kuwait. He tortured and maimed his political enemies. He robbed the treasury of his own country while countless numbers lived in poverty and deprivation.

Knowing this, other countries in the Middle East and Europe ignored Hussein’s atrocities either because they were getting rich dealing with him or because they feared retribution should they act.



Not so the United States. When Hussein invaded his neighbor Kuwait, we did not turn a blind eye.

When Hussein ignored U.N. resolutions, continued to murder the Iraqi people, used chemical weapons against the Kurds and was suspected of arming to threaten others, we did not ignore the pleas of his victims. We heard the cries of his starving people while he himself was stealing millions from the U.N.'s oil-for-food program.

While the rest of the world contented itself to watch the suffering from afar, the United States did not. We extended a helping hand and sent our nation's finest.

And whom did we send? We tend to think of the United States as if it were one huge, monolithic entity. But, really, it's not. It's people – individual people with their own individual hopes and dreams.

It might have been someone like Army Pvt. Cory Depew from Indianapolis, who gave all he had so that others could be free. Or like a National Guard corporal from Biloxi who put a promising career on hold when she got orders to Iraq. Or like a Marine lieutenant colonel from Pittsburgh whose oldest daughter was just accepted at Penn State. Or a Navy corpsman second class who dreams of going to OCS.

We sent these young people, and thousands like them, to right the wrongs of a heartless dictator.

Each went willingly into harm's way, not for personal gain but out of a sense of duty, out of compassion for the downtrodden, and, perhaps, as examples of what Jesus meant when he said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

I am so proud of our brave servicemen and women who answered their nation's call, harkened to a higher purpose, left personal ambition behind and stepped forward to help their "neighbors."

They went into Iraq to bind up her wounds, move her to a place of safety and restore her to health.

Just like the Samaritan of old, these young men and women are still providing comfort and aid to the injured, without regard for the cost, because they are part of a national heart filled with compassion. I think Jesus would approve of what they have done, and he would call each of them a "Good Samaritan." 🌿

The Rev. Jerome D. Fortenberry, CM, joined The American Legion in 1946, and served as National Chaplain 1973-74. Fortenberry, who serves as Chaplain of "Army, Navy, Air Force Veterans in Canada, U.S. Unit," delivered this message at the 2005 ANAVICUS memorial service in Washington.



A Gold Star Mother's Remembrance

Pvt. Cory Depew

B Company, 2nd Squadron,
14th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade,
25th Infantry Division
Stryker Brigade Combat Team
Fort Lewis, Wash.

"It is the Soldier"

It is the soldier, not the reporter
Who has given us freedom of the press.
It is the soldier, not the poet
Who has given us freedom of speech.

It is the soldier, not the campus organizer
Who has given us the freedom to demonstrate.
It is the soldier, not the lawyer
Who has given us the right to a fair trial.

It is the soldier
Who salutes the flag,
Who serves under the flag,
Whose coffin is draped in the flag,
Who allows the protester to burn the flag.

– Charles M. Province

It is the mom of the soldier who would like to say
"thank you" for the prayers, kindness and love
you have shown for Pvt. Cory Depew, who gave
his life in Operation Iraqi Freedom so that others
shall be free.

Always remember Cory's warm smile, his great
sense of humor, his love for his family and his
country, and how he loved to surprise everyone.
He continues to surprise us by being honored
with the Purple Heart, Bronze Star Medal, Army
Good Conduct Medal, the Indiana State Senate
and House of Representatives resolution
memorializing Pvt. Cory Depew, the Army Pvt.
Cory Depew Freedom Award, and many more.

– Sheryl A. May, mother of Pvt. Depew

[U.S. FLAG]

'A symbol of everything I believed in...'

The following is an excerpt from a statement made by Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham, R-Calif., after he introduced H.J. Res. 10, the flag-protection amendment, on Jan. 25.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce legislation which would amend the Constitution to prevent desecration of the American flag ...

Each color on the flag, each star and each stripe, evokes emotion in me, and together they stand as a symbol of everything I believed in about this country when I fought to defend it. When I heard that some in my country were opposing my military's involvement in Vietnam, that flag reminded me of our tolerance for differences and our endurance through unity.

It was a steady symbol of the liberties we enjoy – a way of life that should be protected for future generations and defended for others who aspire to it. From the soldier deployed or detained abroad to the policemen and firefighters protecting citizens in communities, it has stood as a symbol of the country we love, the reason we serve and most important, the sacrifices that have been made.

Support for H.J. Res. 10

American Legion National Commander Thomas P. Cadmus urges Legionnaires to contact their congressional representatives to seek their co-sponsorship of H.J. Res. 10. If they are already co-sponsors, thank them. You can track the bill's progress online. capwiz.com

There have been several major incidents of flag burning since the Court ruling in 1990. These incidents tear at me and represent a direct attack on all I hold dear about this country. The Constitution was not designed to protect actions which jeopardize others' rights, and the government has long acted to restrict speech and conduct that could cause harm to others. Those who want to express their anger against this country have options that don't involve destroying the sacred symbol that

belongs to all citizens.

At a time when we are faced with increasing youth violence and cultural breakdown, restoring our most recognized sign of unity would be a positive step in the right direction – providing a steady reminder that living free comes with responsibility to respect others. Since 9/11, the flag has come to represent even more for all Americans and a reminder of those who were lost protecting us. Allowing its desecration is an insult to all those who perished.



U.S. Flag DVD offers teachers, veterans a new educational tool

"Two gentlemen from The American Legion came to our classroom and showed the DVD, folded the flag, and talked about the flag's history, symbolism and respect of the flag. My students enjoyed the presentation! Excellent!"

– A Minnesota elementary school teacher

"For Which It Stands" is an American Legion-produced DVD that teaches the history, significance and meaning of the U.S. Flag, along with guidance about flag etiquette. They are \$7.95 each and can be purchased through the Emblem Sales division. emblem.legion.org, (888) 453-4466

[FOREIGN AFFAIRS]

Operation Iranian Freedom on the table

A bipartisan group of senators has introduced a bill to promote democracy in Iran. S. 333 or the "Iran Freedom and Support Act of 2005" would make it U.S. policy "to support efforts by the people of Iran to exercise self-determination (and) to actively support a national referendum in Iran with oversight by international observers and monitors."

The bill would earmark \$10 million for pro-democracy efforts in Iran and

authorize the president to assist Iranian individuals and organizations that:

- Oppose terrorism.
- Promote nonproliferation of weapons.
- Support democratic reform of the government.
- Respect human rights.
- Support equality of opportunity.
- Support freedom of speech, association, religion and the press.



A masked Iranian militant vows to fight America. AP

Flag amendment introduced in Senate

On April 14, Sens. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, and Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., introduced **S.J. Res. 12**, legislation that reads, "The Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States."

The amendment was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary and, as of April 19, listed 50 co-sponsors.

"It is not ... remarkable that the American people, acting through the legislative branch of the government, early in their history, prescribed a flag as symbolical of the existence and sovereignty of the nation ... love both of the common country and of the state will diminish in proportion as respect for the flag is weakened."

— U.S. Chief Justice John Marshall Harlan, 1907, *Halter v. Nebraska*

Points on the Stars and Stripes

■ Betsy Ross knew George Washington from Philadelphia's Christ Church, where they had neighboring pews. She had embroidered ruffles for his shirt bosoms and cuffs.

■ Washington's original sketch of the flag indicated six-pointed stars. Ross recommended a five-pointed star. When the committee protested that this was too difficult, she folded a piece of paper and cut a five-pointed star with a single snip. The audience, impressed, took her advice.

■ The first time the U.S. Flag flew over a foreign fort was in Libya, over Fort Derne on the shores of Tripoli.

■ Francis Scott Key's source of music for "The Star-Spangled Banner" was an old English drinking song called "To Anacreon in Heaven."

■ After House and Senate wings were added to the U.S. Capitol in the 1850s, even before the dome was completed, photos show flags flying over each new wing and the central east and west fronts.

■ The only man ever honored for cutting the U.S. Flag into pieces was Robert Peary, who left the fragments scattered at the North Pole.

■ Flag experts are called "vexillologists."

Source: ushistory.org



Paul Souders/IPN

[POLITICS]

Congressional pensions: fact or fiscal fiction?

Everyone knows members of Congress don't contribute to Social Security, nor are they eligible to receive Social Security benefits, right? And it only takes one day in office to rake in lifetime pension checks equal to, or higher than, fulltime congressional salaries? Not quite. Congress has indeed authorized generous retirement benefits for its members, but since January 1984, members have been required to pay into Social Security and are eligible for

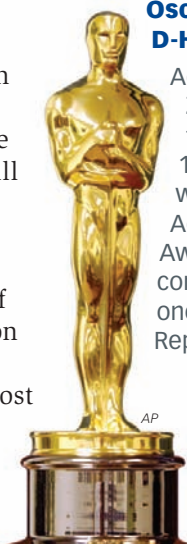
benefits. Members participating in the congressional pension system are vested after five years, not one day, and not all can retire with full pensions.

The average annuity for retired members in 1998 was \$50,616 or \$46,908, depending on the type of pension. National Taxpayers Union spokesman Pete Sepp says that in 2002, 411 congressional retirees cost taxpayers some \$22 million.

[POLL]

Oscar, D-Hollywood

According to a Zogby poll, four in 10 Democrats watched the Academy Awards, compared to one in eight Republicans.



AP

"There are no losers today. Fifty-four champion orators arrived. Fifty-four leave as champions."

— Joseph E. Caouette Jr., chairman of The American Legion National Americanism Commission

Keeping the Constitution alive and well

"I cannot say enough about the American Legion," Daniel F. Berring, of Orinda, Calif., said after he accepted his first-place plaque at the National Oratorical Contest in Indianapolis on April 10. He was awarded \$18,000 in scholarship money. "I really didn't appreciate the importance or relevance of the Legion oratorical program until I became involved. This is a great event, run professionally. I'm very pleased that my message was well-received by the judges. And, of course, this is going to be a very welcome surprise back home." He was sponsored by Post 515 in Lafayette, Calif.

The following text is an excerpt from his oration:

John F. Kennedy once declared, "We shall pay any price and bear any burden to assure the survival and success of liberty." But are we willing to pay any price? Are we willing to bear any burden? Are we showing the drive for freedom, the thirst for democracy and the respect for liberty today, when 42 percent of registered voters stay home on Election Day? When, according to the National Endowment for the Humanities, 75 percent of college seniors cannot distinguish the words of the U.S. Constitution from those of Karl Marx? When only one third of Americans know what the Bill of Rights is and what it protects?

George Bernard Shaw once said, "Liberty means responsibility." If we are to continue to expect to live in the free society we have today, we must be willing to pay our dues, because freedom isn't free.

No matter how tall and strong a tree becomes, it will snap in the face of turbulence if it does not receive its sunlight, water and soil. We must know, honor and protect our Constitution and the rights it gives us. Because if Americans become apathetic and indifferent about their liberties, they are bound to lose them. As Justice Learned Hand once said, "Liberty lives in the hearts of men and women; if it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it. Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom."

We all must fight the good fight and continue our never-ending vigil to preserve our Constitution and the ideals that lived on the tip of James Madison's quill. But know that you don't need the loudest



Daniel F. Berring delivers the champion oration in Indianapolis. *James V. Carroll*

voice or the keenest mind or the strongest arms to support liberty and protect the Constitution. You just need the will and the want to preserve them. Fill out your census. Vote in an election. Salute the flag. Honor your veterans. Recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Sing the words of our National Anthem. And, to borrow the words of John F. Kennedy, "The energy, the faith, the devotion which we can bring to this endeavor will light this country and all those who serve it." So, do not let this oration end when I step down from the stage, for this is no transitory quest. As citizens, let us set ourselves squarely on the track of liberty. Let us forever look to the sky and marvel at the tree that we have

cared for. Let us know, honor and protect our Constitution ... (Our) Constitution is more than just pages of parchment that live in

the National Archive. It is the light in the eye of the immigrant, the proud new citizen that is swearing his allegiance to our founding document today. It is the honor we see in the faces of our veterans, those who have sworn to protect it. And it is the hope that lives in the heart of every American that these ideals, these freedoms, this liberty, this Constitution will last forever.

Runners-up

Jack Stewart Smith of Boise, Idaho, placed second with his oration, "We The People." Smith, sponsored by Boise Post 136, earned a \$16,000 scholarship.

Daniel P. Doozan of Brandon, Fla., was third with "The Fourth Branch," earning him a \$14,000 scholarship. He was sponsored by Tampa Post 5.



Maj. Tom Conner, right, uses "Strength for Service to God and Country" to inspire fellow Marines before combat missions in Iraq. *Courtesy Tom Conner*

Scout resurrects prayer book

As a Navy corpsman during World War II and the Korean War, Eugene Hunsberger often read from a pocket-sized prayer book to console dying soldiers. The devotion-al also strengthened Hunsberger in the face of his own wartime perils. In later years, he shared passages with the ill in hospital beds, and with young men over Boy Scout campfires.

"Strength for Service to God and Country" was first published by the United Methodist Church in 1942 – shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor – for U.S. military personnel. The book contained daily meditations by clergy, academics and business leaders. Millions of troops carried it during the war. It was republished during the Korean War, then went out of print.

The book was all but forgotten until 16-year-old Evan Hunsberger of Orange, Calif., asked his grandfather Eugene about it and why it meant so much to him. After listening to his grandfather, the teenager was inspired to fulfill one of his requirements to become

an Eagle Scout, the highest level in Boy Scouts. The United Methodist Publishing House gave the teen

permission to republish the book, and the church gave permission to distribute it to deployed American troops. Evan and 45 Scout volunteers spent 2,500 hours updating the text. With Pentagon approval, the church began trying to raise \$3 million to give copies to 1 million U.S. troops.

The original edition contained devotions written by well-known religious and industrial leaders. The new edition has writings by arch-bishops, rabbis and pastors, university

presidents and notable Americans.

Eugene Hunsberger didn't live long enough to see his grandson's dream come true, but the Methodist Church has distributed more than 150,000 copies to deployed troops, firefighters and police officers, and others in public service.

– Elissa Kaupisch



James V. Carroll

Learn more

umtv.org
(click on "Archives,"
then April 9, 2003)

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(800) 321-5692

strengthforservice.org

A two-front battle against the ACLU

American Legion National Commander Thomas P. Cadmus has vowed to fight all the way to the Supreme Court to end the American Civil Liberties Union's attempts to deny the Boy Scouts of America its right to free association. He also has called upon Congress to change a law that currently allows the ACLU to profit financially by assaulting American values at taxpayer expense.

Front 1: Cadmus wrote letters in April to Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., and to Rep. Jo Ann Davis, R-Va., guardedly supporting their bills to protect the Boy Scouts from legal assaults after an ACLU-driven directive from the Pentagon ended Scout sponsorship at military bases. The ACLU's most recent attack on the Scouts revolves around a reference to God in the Scout oath. Public schools also have been pressured by the ACLU to end Scout sponsorships. Cadmus is concerned that ACLU-influenced court decisions – if unchallenged and allowed to stand – will jeopardize the National Boy Scout Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill Army base in Virginia.

Front 2: Cadmus has called upon the 2.7 million members of The American Legion to urge Congress to amend the Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S. Code Sec. 1983, which allows the ACLU to collect taxpayer-funded attorney fees. "The courts are awarding the ACLU millions of dollars in taxpayer-paid attorney fees ... While the law was written to ensure legitimate victims of civil-rights violations could obtain representation, it has been exploited by the ACLU in First Amendment 'establishment of religion clause' cases (with no real plaintiff to whom attorney fees would be charged)."

[VOICES]

"This week, the U.S. Navy launched a nuclear submarine named after Jimmy Carter. Experts say the sub will be ineffective for four years but tremendously respected once it's retired."

– Late-night talk-show host Conan O'Brien

"The D-word is the farthest thing from my thoughts."

– Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey, discounting the possibility of a draft

"If the invaders reach Iran, the country will turn into a burning hell for them."

– Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, on U.S. demands that his country abandon its nuclear program

"God and the politicians willing, the United States can declare peace upon the world, and win it."

– Ely Culbertson, "Must We Fight Russia," (1946)

"The image of Jane Fonda, Barbarella, Henry Fonda's daughter ... sitting on an enemy aircraft gun was a betrayal ... the largest lapse of judgment that I can even imagine ..."

There are hundreds of American delegations that had met with the POWs. It's not something that I will apologize for"

– Jane Fonda in a "60 Minutes" interview about her autobiography, "Jane Fonda: My Life So Far." Fonda said she regards her visit to North Vietnam as one of the biggest mistakes of her life and a betrayal of the U.S. military, soldiers and "the country that gave me privilege." Fonda did not apologize for visiting Hanoi and being photographed with American POWs, which the enemy used as propaganda.

"A lot more people beat me now."

– Dwight D. Eisenhower, noting a change in his golf game after leaving the White House

[LEGIONNAIRES IN ACTION]



The 1960-built home of Post 44 in Gulf Shores, Ala., was obliterated by Ivan last fall.

Coast post slammed by Ivan:

'We're going to rebuild.'



For more information about The American

Legion's National Emergency Fund, contact the National Internal Affairs Division.

(317) 630-1330

ia@legion.org

Four months before the devastating tsunami struck southern Asia, Hurricane Ivan crashed into 400 miles of coastline along the Gulf of Mexico. The storm hit Gulf Shores, Ala., with winds up to 130 mph, swamping communities.

James Pilgrim, commander of Gulf Shores, Ala., Post 44, recalls Ivan's assault: "Our building sits on a bayou. When the storm came in, water surged from the bayou and a nearby lake, into our building. We had seven feet of water inside the building and wind damage on the roof. When you get seven feet of water inside a building and it recedes, it tears everything out with it. Ivan demolished our building. The building's contents were ruined. We were able to get our charters and some records, but we lost everything else."

The 6,000-square-foot post home, built in 1960, had previously been flooded twice by hurricanes – once with two feet of water, the other with three feet. But Ivan was the worst of all.

[MEMBERSHIP]

Big 12 winners use rewards to buy equipment

The departments of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, South Dakota, Maine, Delaware, Vermont and the District of Columbia were recent winners in The American Legion's Big 12 Competition. Each receives reimbursement for computer equipment or software valued at up to \$2,000.

The Big 12 rewards departments that meet or exceed target pledges made earlier at the Commanders and Adjutants Conference. Each department must achieve at least 90 percent of its 2005 membership goal by the February target date, and many pledge to reach goals higher than 90 percent.

South Dakota plans to buy AIMS membership software with its \$2,000 award. Department Adjutant Ron Boyd says he is eager to introduce AIMS to the department's operations. "This is a perfect opportunity to put this money to good use," he said.

Vermont also exceeded its bid, made last October. "We used the Big 12 money to purchase a portable projection system to use as we travel," Vermont Commander Ralph Brown said.

The awards can help pay for computers or software, hire Web consultants, or buy digital cameras, printers or other automated equipment.

Comparing the devastation in Alabama to the tsunami in Southeast Asia, Pilgrim said, "The tsunami took a lot of lives. We were fortunate that we didn't lose any lives here. As far as damage, many buildings in the area were lost, many homes lost their roofs, and a lot of people won't get back in their homes for months. For our community and our post, it's been very devastating.

"We're going to rebuild. But I don't know if we're going to build on the same site or another location. I think we can get enough out of the property to buy another piece of property but not enough to rebuild the size facility we had. It was a beautiful post with a nice barbecue area. We are a good-size post with 555 Legion members, over 200 Auxiliary and about 85 SAL members."

After the disaster, Post 99, six miles away in Tully, Ala., opened its doors, providing Post 44 with a meeting place until reconstruction is complete. Post 44 had flood insurance, but Pilgrim said there still will be a shortfall. Fundraisers are helping, and the post received a \$5,000 grant from the Legion's National Emergency Fund.

"Some of our sister posts in the state of Alabama and even a post in Illinois have donated money," Pilgrim said. "Members and local businesses also have contributed. Our post is a pillar of the community. On Sept. 11, 2001, even people who weren't members came to the post because they felt safe there."

— Elissa Kaupisch

National Emergency Fund vital to storm-torn posts

The American Legion Department of Florida has approved more than 170 National Emergency Fund applications since the rash of hurricanes swept the coastal Southeast last September. More than \$210,000 in funds were distributed. Florida Adjutant John Newstreet said 12 applications were from Legion posts, and 160 were from individuals. "When people are hurting the most is when The American Legion really needs to answer the call," Newstreet said. In addition to the \$500,000 goal set for NEF contributions annually, National Commander Thomas P. Cadmus has asked the Legion family to contribute \$1 for every member to the NEF this year. By April, donations surpassed last year's 12-month total by more than \$100,000.

"We need to continue to support that effort," Newstreet said. "We're committed to continuing to donate to the NEF. We want to start to give back what we've taken."

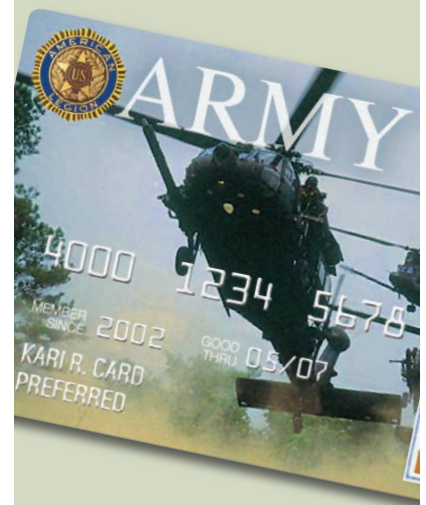
[EDUCATION]

Officers targeted for MBAs

A growing number of newly discharged military officers, some with combat experience, are turning to graduate school after discharge, particularly masters of business administration degrees. The payoff, according to a report from Washington University in St. Louis, can be big. Former military officers with MBAs can expect starting salaries of

\$84,000 a year and signing bonuses of up to \$16,000. A report issued by Military MBA, an education resource center, predicts the number of military officers receiving MBAs will more than triple by 2007. "They are incredibly focused and mission-oriented," says Stuart Greenbaum, former dean of Washington University's business school.

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Boys State at 70: roots recalled by founder's daughter

Seventy years ago, one of The American Legion's most respected department programs – Boys State – was born. The program was then, and remains today, a dynamic opportunity for high-school juniors interested in public service. Few may remember, however, that the program was born to ward off the influence of communism on American youth in the 1930s. "My father and a group of Legionnaires had heard about pro-communist Young Pioneer or Freedom Camps springing up across America," says Helen Kennedy Ryan, daughter of Hayes Kennedy, a Boys State founder. "They decided to take action to combat this movement."

In 1934, Hayes Kennedy was teaching at Loyola University Law School and was also the Department of Illinois Americanism chairman. He and Harold L. Card, a central Illinois high-school teacher and Boy Scout chairman, were en route home from New York City with a group of other Legionnaires when they stopped to inspect a Young Pioneer Camp in Pennsylvania. They had heard that communists in America were conducting camps and teaching high-school boys that democracy had outworn its usefulness.

Afterward, Kennedy wrote, "All delegates were wearing the brown German uniforms with high black boots and using the famous German goose step when marching. The camps were indeed similar to Nazi camps." The small group of Illinois Legionnaires was determined to come up with a countermeasure to instill in American youth pride and desire to preserve their form of government.

Card told Kennedy about an experience he'd had supervising a large group of Boy Scouts in Indiana. He organized the camp into a "city" with offices such as police, fire, health and sanitation.

"The men discussed how the Legion could implement a similar program, through the Americanism division for young men, letting the youth experience what U.S. government is like for one week during the summer," Ryan said. Illinois Legion officers embraced the idea, and the first Boys State was conducted at the state fairgrounds in Springfield, Ill., in June 1935. The 235 boys

were housed in cow barns on the fairgrounds "after we cleaned and disinfected them as best we could," Kennedy wrote. "The name 'Boys State' was suggested, and since they had set up city, county and state governments, the name was unanimously adopted."

In 1935, the National Executive Committee passed a resolution making Boys State an official Legion program. Over the next few years, Kennedy

and Card assisted Legion departments in organizing programs throughout the country. The first Boys Nation, then called Boys Forum of National Government, convened in August 1946 at American University in Washington.

Today, Boys State has an annual participation of approximately 25,000 nationwide. For information, contact your department headquarters. For information about Boys Nation, call (317) 630-1207 or e-mail acy@legion.org.

– Elissa Kaupisch



Participants gather at the first Sunflower Boys State in Wichita, Kan., in 1937. *American Legion Library*

[VERSE]

God and the Soldier

**God and the soldier
All men adore
In time of trouble,
And no more;
For when war is over
And all things righted,
God is neglected –
The old soldier slighted.**

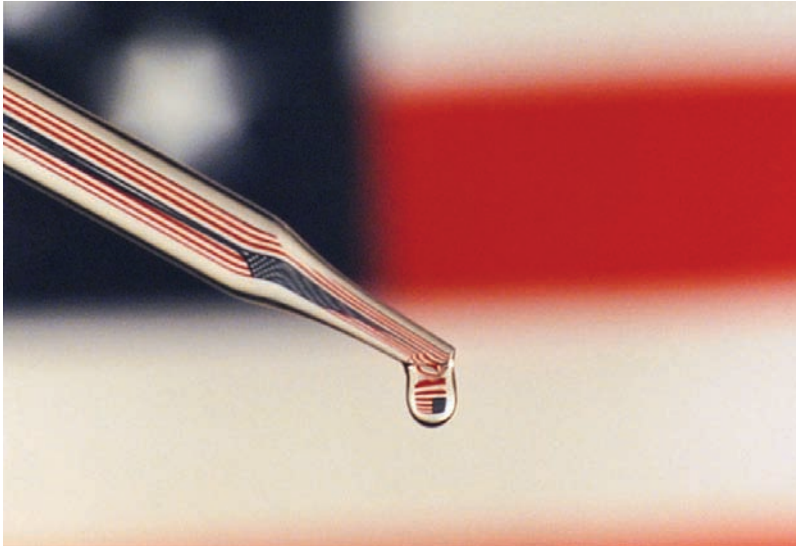
– Author unknown

[VETERANS AFFAIRS]

VA psychiatric funding lags behind rate of PTSD

Between October 2003 and February 2005, 26 percent of veterans from the war on terrorism sought VA mental-health care. The No. 1 diagnosis was post-traumatic stress disorder, afflicting 10 percent. About 31 percent of male Vietnam War veterans developed PTSD, but many did not come forward for years, a point not lost on West Los Angeles VA psychiatrist Bruce Kagan, who told *USA Today* that budget cuts in psychiatric care may soon loom large: "If (patients) come in numbers predicted – the numbers VA's own studies predict – we could be overwhelmed."

[GALLERY]



Flag Drop

Garry Norton of Coatesville, Pa., received the gold medal in the color photography category at the VA's 2004 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in Salt Lake City. Norton, who served as an Airborne Ranger during the Vietnam War, says photography is his outlet to express patriotism and love of country. He has created numerous patriotic photographic images, including many in New York City after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center. Information about his work is available via e-mail. photoranger@comcast.net Other works of art from the festival can be viewed on the VA Web site. www1.va.gov/vetevent/caf/2004/artgallery.cfm



Proposed prototypes of The American Legion Freedom Car

[SPORTS]

Legion's Freedom Car hits NASCAR circuit

The American Legion has teamed with Braun Racing to sponsor The American Legion Freedom Car on the NASCAR Busch Series through 2007.

The red, white and blue Freedom Car was expected to be ready to race May 28 in the CarQuest Auto Parts 300 at Lowes Motor Speedway in Charlotte, N.C.



Todd Braun, owner and president of Braun Racing, elevated his race team to NASCAR competition three years ago. Since that time, Braun Racing has grown into a winning team on the NASCAR circuit with talented young drivers such as David Stremme, Jamie McMurray, Casey Mears and Shane Hmiel.

The American Legion Freedom Car is the second Busch Series car in the 2005 Braun Racing stable. Hmiel, who drives the 32 WinFuel Chevrolet, recently signed a two-year contract to run a full NASCAR Busch Series for Braun Racing.

Racing fans can learn more by going to The American Legion Web site and clicking on The American Legion Freedom Car link. legion.org

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Exercise, healthy diet decrease risks for obesity, diabetes.

BY DR. STEPHAN D. FIHN



Exercise tips

Although starting a new exercise program is not easy, it does not have to be a grind. Remember to check with your doctor before undertaking any exercise program. Here are a few tips to help start:

- Vary your routine. Don't forget that chores like yard work or house-cleaning, if done regularly, can be part of your overall exercise program.
- Choose activities that build flexibility, muscle strength and cardiovascular fitness.
- Find a friend or family member to join you. Many communities have adult sports leagues – often with special divisions for those 55 and older – offering events in golf, bowling, softball, swimming and many other sports.
- Choose a time that's consistent, and keep this daily appointment with yourself.
- Set realistic goals. Be aware that initially you may not be able to do as much as you think you should.
- Keep a record of your progress, and reward yourself when you achieve a goal.

Americans are less physically active than they ever have been. Busy schedules and distractions such as television and the Internet often leave little time for exercise, and more people than ever work in sedentary jobs. A recent study by researchers at the Puget Sound VA and the University of Washington revealed that only one in five Americans exercise regularly.

This lack of exercise, combined with a poor diet, is causing an epidemic of obesity and diabetes that threatens to erase all the improvements in health and life expectancy over the past several decades.

Not only do we pay a personal price for not exercising, but society also bears the costs as well. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that the nation's Medicare and Medicaid programs spend more than \$80 billion each year on chronic conditions diagnosed more often in patients who don't exercise. In 2004, Medicare spent more than \$13 billion on treatment for diabetes – a disease researchers say can be prevented to a significant extent by exercise.

The good news is that not only diabetes, but other diseases, too – including high blood pressure and heart disease – can be prevented or improved in large measure by activities such as walking, jogging, light aerobics or swimming, combined with a healthy diet. Walking, in fact, can strengthen and condition the body to the same extent as jogging if we walk just a little longer or faster.

Benefits Abound. VA researchers and other scientists and clinicians have documented the wide-reaching benefits of exercise.

A team at the Palo Alto VA showed that exercise capacity – as measured by performance on a treadmill – was a stronger predictor of the risk of death than any established cardiovascular risk factors. The study, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 2002, included more than 6,200 healthy men.

In a long-term study of more than 2,000 older Hawaiian men, conducted by researchers from the University of Virginia and the Honolulu VA, men who walked regularly were the least likely to develop dementia. Although walking might merely indicate an overall healthier lifestyle, the researchers said walking was most likely a significant factor in determining the overall vitality and brain health of the men in the study. The research appeared in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* last year.

Don't delay. Get moving today, and you're guaranteed to feel stronger, more flexible and more energetic.

Dr. Stephan D. Fihn is acting chief research and development officer for the Veterans Health Administration.

This article is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their personal physicians when they have health problems.

[HONOR]

Two celebrations planned to welcome home Vietnam War veterans

Thirty years after the fall of Saigon, veterans of the Vietnam War will receive two celebrations to welcome them home, one this month and another in November.

Operation Homecoming USA: America's Tribute to Vietnam Veterans, Branson, Mo., June 13. Organizers say more than 100,000 veterans are expected. The brainchild of West Point grad Steve Presley and decorated Vietnam War veteran and author Gary Linderer, the event features a "Welcome Home" parade, military demonstrations and displays, a memorial service at the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall, an air show and performances by such musical acts as the Fifth Dimension, Mary Wilson and the Supremes, the Beach Boys, the Four Tops, the Doobie Brothers, the Oak Ridge Boys, Tony Orlando and others.
operationhomecomingusa.com, (417) 336-5719

Operation Welcome Home, Las Vegas, Nov. 10-13. Inspired by a restaurant conversation between Mike Jackson and Tara Dixon-Engel, co-authors of "Naked in Da Nang," a memoir of Jackson's tour as a forward air-control pilot in Vietnam, the event is scheduled to include a gala dinner and USO-style show, a "Welcome Home" parade synchronized between Las Vegas and communities nationwide, an air show by Aviation Nation, reunions and special gatherings.
welcomehome.aviationnation.org, (702) 208-0515

[ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION]



The Minutemen

A barbed-wire fence separates Mexico from America near Naco, Ariz. In places, the fence was almost non-existent, with gaping holes. Volunteers in the Minuteman Project patrolled the border this spring, detaining dozens of undocumented immigrants.

© Roberto M. Sanchez/Corbis

Military space invaders

500: minimum number of times the presence of undocumented immigrants from Mexico shut down the training range at the Marine Corps Air Station near Yuma, Ariz., between July 2004 and April 2005, according to a report in *The Boston Globe*

1,100: approximate number of training hours lost due to illegal immigrants at the training area, which spans about 40 miles along the U.S.-Mexico border where testing of laser weapons, bombs, machine guns and 209 mm cannons is conducted

1,500: minimum number of undocumented immigrants detained on the range in 2004

1,100: minimum number of undocumented immigrants detained on the training range in only the first three months of 2005

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The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to *The American Legion Magazine*, Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail reunions@legion.org.

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are published free of charge.

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"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim. Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name,

telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to *The American Legion Magazine*, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail reunions@legion.org.

The magazine will not publish the names of individuals, only the name of the unit from which you seek people. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life memberships by their posts. This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership. Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to *The American Legion Magazine*, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

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To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to *The American Legion Magazine*, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206. Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

AIR FORCE/ARMY AIR FORCES

6th Bomb Wing (Walker AFB, 1940-1966), Roswell, NM, 9/26-29, Warren Harris, (928) 567-3485, chub@sedona.net; **8th Ftr Cont Sqn 5th AF (WWII)**, Tucson, AZ, 9/25-30, G. Dickson, (307) 856-5526; **13th FS (Selfridge AFB, 1953-1955)**, Dayton, OH, 9/22-25, Jared Potvin, (503) 636-3417, potco@uswest.net; **13th "Jungle" AF Vets (All Units)**, Huntsville, AL, 10/19-22, Phil Dyer, (231) 843-9597; **15th TCS (WWII)**, Milwaukee, 9/9-12, Linda Sunde, (414) 962-5707, sundel@execpc.com; **18th Ftr Wing Assn**, Oklahoma City, 9/8-10, George Banasky, 423 S. 105th E. Place, Tulsa, OK 74128; **21st/6461st TCS "Kyushu Gypsies" (Korea)**, San Diego, 9/21-25, Dana Mansur, (908) 782-1657, kgypsy@patmedia.net; **31st Ftr Officer Assn**, Austin, TX, 10/6-9, Rocky Eubank, (512) 282-1077, rockyeub@aol.com; **39th Ftr Sqn Assn - 40th, 41st Ftr Sqdns 35th Ftr Sqn 5th AF (1941-2005)**, Washington, 9/28-10/2, Roger Rehn, (530) 644-7346, rol7346@sbcglobal.net

59th Med Grp (Burtonwood, England), Clearwater Beach, FL, 11/3-6, Bill Weyman, (314) 434-8144, bufbil@sbcglobal.net; **61st TCS "Green Hornets"**, Jacksonville, AR, 9/29-10/2, Ben Hendrickson, (479) 582-9436, sirben1@sbcglobal.net; **64th Trp Carrier Grp**, Fort Worth, TX, Oct, James Kent, (817) 732-0890; **98th Bomb Grp Vets Assn**, Las Vegas, 10/3-6, Dennis Posey, (770) 509-7734, dposey@comcast.net; **99th Bomb Grp (WWII)**, Tunica Resorts, MS, 10/17-20, David Hill, (901) 680-0002, warwings@att.net; **356th Ftr Grp (1943-1945)**, Falls Church, VA, 9/15-18, Jim Stowell, (262) 763-7665, jstowell@core.com; **358th Ftr Grps & Auxiliaries "Orange Tails"**, San Antonio, 10/6-9, Lubbertus Lok, (717) 629-3488; **380th Org Maint Sqn Bomber & Tanker Branches**, Plattsburgh, NY, 7/15-17, Robert Manchester, (518) 643-8977, nursegun@primelink1.net

406th Ftr Grp, San Antonio, 11/8-12, Sue Johnson, (608) 868-3603; **416th Night Ftr Sqn/416th Tact Ftr Sqn All Ranks (WWII-1993)**, Scottsdale, AZ, 10/6-9, Ron Green, (480) 595-8693, rongreen416@member.afa.org; **416th Bomb Grp (L)**, Nashville, TN, 8/11-14, Ralph Conte, (573) 817-9247; **456th Bomb Grp 15th AF (WWII)**, Arlington, VA, 8/31-9/4, Ed Moore, (785) 625-7515; **461st Bomb Wing B-52/KC-135, 4128th Strat Wing SAC (Amarillo AFB, TX)**, Omaha, NE, 9/29-10/2, Bill Davies, (501) 225-2400, widiavies3@comcast.net; **479th Field Maint Sqn (George AFB, 1955-1960)**, Victorville, CA, 10/11-13, William Moffat, (760) 244-2483, wim1909@msn.com; **483rd Bomb Grp (H) Assn**, Galveston, TX, 10/10-15, Claude Jackson, (713) 472-1572, clauda483@sbcglobal.net; **486th Bomb Grp Assn**, Arlington, VA, 10/12-16, William Phelps, (812) 867-2991; **491st Bomb Grp (H) 8th AF (England, WWII)**, San Diego, 10/12-16, Chris Dracopoulos, (781) 324-1100, chrisdracopoulos@aol.com

com; 510th FS "Buzzards", Fairborn, OH, 10/12-15, Stephen Tanner, (281) 550-5518, buzzardroost@charter.net; **511th AC&W Grp 614th, 847th, 848th AC&W Sqdns & 39th AD (ADCC)**, San Antonio, 9/21-25, Don Simmons, (972) 231-6518, dona712@sbcglobal.net; **610th, 618th, 850th AC&W Sqdns/527th AC&W Grp & ADCC Itazuke AB, Japan**, San Antonio, 9/21-25, Don Simmons, (972) 231-6518, dona712@sbcglobal.net; **709th MP Bn**, Buffalo, NY, 9/16-18, Richard Holland, (716) 965-2485, holland11@netsync.net; **764th Radar Sqn**, St. Albans, VT, 8/19-20, Chuck Thweatt, (802) 524-2267, cat417@excel.com; **781st Bomb Sqn 465th Bomb Group (H) 15th AF**, Shreveport, LA, 10/6-8, John Ogden, (281) 337-3494, johnoco@hal-pc.org; **820th Eng Avn Bn (Beale AFB, 1953-1954)**, Pigeon Forge, TN, 10/6-9, Robert Schamber, (713) 473-5015, schamber@pdq.net

Abn Maint Tech Assn - USAFSS, ESC, AFIC, AIA, ACC Cmds, San Antonio, 10/19-22, John Shaffer, (210) 545-2628, jshaffer5@satx.rr.com; **FTMA 7330th Flying Tng Wing MAP (Fürstenfeldbruck, Kaufburen & Landsberg AFBs, 1953-1960)**, Arlington, VA, 9/15-18, Jim Baisden, (703) 768-7252, blackhackt33@aol.com; **Pilot Class 43-K**, San Antonio, 9/21-25, Tom Schuler, (513) 539-7185, tschuler@sisc.com; **Pilot Class 53 Easy**, Dayton, OH, 9/23-25, Tom Brill, (317) 501-8610, jwbrillrs@aol.com; **"Raven" Forward Air Controllers (Laos)**, San Antonio, 10/20-23, Ed Gunter, (830) 560-2522, edgunter@aol.com; **Sampson AFB NY Vets Fellowship**, Cadiz, KY, 10/10-14, Walt Steesy, (607) 532-4204, samafvbet.com

ARMY

1/320 FA Charlie Btry, Clarksville, TN, 8/27-29, Matt Huff, (740) 522-6724, matthuff@pointman-ministries.org; **1st Armd Div Assn**, Herndon, VA, 8/16-21, Joe Theriot, (270) 737-0901; **1st Cav Div Charlie Co 2nd Bn 7th Cav Rgt "Garryowen"**, Winston, GA, 8/9-14, Jerry Armstrong, (770) 942-4249, jcomet2@comcast.net; **1st Eng Cbt Bn**, Lake George, NY, 9/11-14, Larry Blair, (505) 821-1386, nose4news@hotmail.com; **3rd Armd Div 65th FA Bn (1955-1957)**, Dubuque, IA, 7/9, Daniel Leibfried, (563) 583-8912; **3rd Armd Div Assn**, Indianapolis, 7/6-9, Paul Smith, (615) 325-9202, bandits132@bellsouth.org; **3rd Inf Rgt (The Old Guard Assn)**, Arlington, VA, 9/21-25, Brett Reistad, (703) 361-1355, reistadbp@aol.com; **10th Corps & All Attached Units (Korea, 1950-1953)**, San Antonio, 9/29-10/1, Clayton Bradshaw, (812) 873-6767; **11th Armd Div (WWII)**, Louisville, KY, 8/14-21, William Hoke, (724) 375-6295, pp11ad@excite.com; **12th Armd Div**, Tulsa, OK, 9/14-17, Jim Feezel, (256) 355-6421, jmfeezel@aol.com; **21st Evac Hosp (WWII)**, Plymouth, IN, 8/4-6, Robert Murphy, (760) 728-7245, rgbmurphy1@adelphia.net; **23rd Inf Rgt (Korea)**, Peoria, IL, 9/16-10, Jim Coulos, (630) 232-2042; **24th Inf Div Assn (IDA)**, Philadelphia, 9/21-24, Sam Slater, (215)

549-6627, ssams104@aol.com; **24th Inf Rgt Cbt Team Assn**, Huntsville, AL, 7/13-17, Wilfred Matthews, (337) 477-4508, wm24thinfrc@aol.com; **29th Div Assn**, Roanoke, VA, 10/6-9, John Wilcox, (301) 695-9558, twoniner@adelphia.net; **29th Sig Bn Cons A, B, C Cos & HQ (Germany & France, 1954-1958)**, Nashville, TN, 9/13-15, James Kluxdal, (641) 856-2831, cmrjarim@jetnetinc.net; **40th Inf Div 160th Rgt A Co Japan & Korea, 1950-1954**, Reno, NV, 9/19-21, Roger Lueckenhoff, (573) 364-4145, lueck@fidnet.com; **68th AAA Gun Bn**, Grand Rapids, MI, 10/6-9, Victor Wayward, (616) 455-5962, janpw@wittetravel.com; **76th Inf Div**, New Orleans, 10/13-16, Bob Donahoe, (508) 240-1201, rdonahoe1@comcast.net; **89th Chem Mortar Bn**, Arlington, VA, Aug, Richard McLennand, (412) 331-3802; **90th Div "Tough Ombres" Assn**, Corpus Christi, TX, 9/29-10/2, J.R. Reid, (630) 789-0204, reids@90thdivisionassociation.org

90th FA Bn 25th Inf Div Assn, Charleston, SC, 10/19-23, Ray Haski, (724) 727-3132; **91st Chem Mortar Bn**, Memphis, TN, 9/29-10/2, O.J. Rosado, (901) 527-2798; **97th Inf Div FA Assn**, Rockford, IL, 9/22-25, Will Schallio, (765) 463-1818, schallio@ecn.purdue.edu; **114th Inf Rgt 44th Div (WWII)**, Baltimore, 9/23-25, Jacob Livingston, (717) 252-9695; **153rd Trans Port Co 14th Bn (Camp Stoneman, CA & Korea, 1950-1951)**, John "Jack" Dunkelberger, (610) 929-1972; **157th Inf Rgt**, Washington, 9/8-11, Gordon Kinley, (619) 698-2795, gordonik@cox.net; **159th Eng Cbt Bn (WWII)**, Lancaster, PA, 9/6-9, Russ Ruch, (570) 622-2942; **164th Inf Assn, Valley City, ND, 9/16-18**, Bernard Wagner, (701) 845-0799; **238th Eng Cbt Bn**, Concord, NC, 7/15-17, Jesse Miller, (717) 718-4813, jmj1700@aol.com; **242nd FA Bn**, Kearney, NE, 8/21, C. Robert Anthony, (308) 324-2791, mjanthony@cozadtel.net

249th Eng Bn All Eras, Akron, OH, 9/15-17, Irmin Magruder, (540) 886-6941, enrg249@verizon.net; **299th Cbt Eng "Dak to Defenders" (Vietnam)**, Reno, NV, 7/28-30, David Swanson, (253) 373-1913, abnbea@comcast.net; **337th-1338th Cbt Engs (1943)**, Wheeling, WV, 8/19-20, Vincent Nilsson, 315 Deer Trail, Canfield, OH 44046; **434th, 435th, 532nd, 900th AA & 473rd Inf Rgt**, Dallas, 9/2-4, LeRoy Good, (765) 659-1256; **503rd & 218 MP Bn (Fort Bragg, NC, 1965-1968)**, Gatlinburg, TN, 7/29-31, Dennis Jarr, (815) 363-5435 ext. 11; **504th AAA Gun Bn**, Akron, OH, 10/13-15, Donna Schmid, (330) 336-5816; **508th AAA Ops Det**, Grand Rapids, MI, 10/6-9, Victor Wayward, (616) 455-5962, janpw@wittetravel.com; **511th Trans Port Co 18th Bn (Camp Stoneman, CA & Ennetok, Marshall Island Op Greenhouse, 1950-1951)**, John "Jack" Dunkelberger, (610) 929-1972; **516th Sig Co (Austria, 1949-1955)**, 10/6-8, Ed Blinn, (516) 358-7852, edru523@juno.com; **534th Eng Boat & Shore Det (WWII)**, St. Charles, MO, 10/11-14, Robert Jarvis, (313) 823-0854, amphib923@comcast.com

net; **547th Eng Bn Cbt Assn**, Norfolk, VA, 8/11-14, Patrick O'Brien, (757) 480-3190; **550th AAA Bn (WWII)**, Westfield, NY, 9/9-10, Vincent Calarco, (716) 326-2320; **553rd FA Bn & 3/18th Arty (Darmstadt, Germany, 1956-1959)**, Chattanooga, TN, 9/20-23, Carroll Dewees, (337) 474-8054, fdewees1@prodigy.net; **712th Trans Railway Operating Bn**, Washington, 9/14-17, Robert Shannon, (910) 949-3920, rgshannon@ac.net; **757th Tank Bn All Cos (WWII)**, Wichita, KS, 8/31-9/4, Fredollin Rottler, (573) 883-3604; **773rd TD Bn Assn**, Corning, NY, 9/15-17, Edward McClelland, (216) 251-0445; **785th MP Bn (WWII)**, Louisville, KY, 6/24-25, Perry McNeil, (850) 872-8116; **804th Eng Avn Bn (SCARWAF)**, Memphis, TN, 9/11-14, Harry Lischer, (314) 822-2364, reunion804teab@webtv.net; **843rd Sig Service Bn (WWII)**, Searcy, AR, 10/5-8, Arnold Freitag, (319) 268-1149, ajfreitag@cfu.net

1108th Eng (C) Grp 48th Eng (C) Bn 235th Eng (C) Bn, Englewood, OH, 9/15-17, Bob Mitchell, (937) 836-6312, willowsprings@voyager.net; **A Trp 4/12 Cav 5th Inf (Quang Tri, Vietnam)**, Las Vegas, 10/20-22, Jim Rinaldi, (585) 392-6288, jazrinaldi@netzero.net; **AZ Army Sec Agency**, Pinetop, AZ, 9/9-11, Dave Waldmann, (520) 378-0159, david.leo.waldmann@us.army.mil; **B Co 179th Inf 45th Inf Div**, Memphis, TN, 8/11-13, W. Lewis Wood, (901) 682-6160, lwood@allenhoshall.com; **B Co 503rd MP Bn (WWII)**, Mystic, CT, 9/18-21, Peter Joseph, (207) 872-2225; **Bravo Co 2nd 12th Cav 1st Cav Div (Vietnam)**, Crystal City, VA, 11/10-13, Al Zeller, (517) 694-5869, zeller@nscl.msu.edu; **C Btry 145th FA**, Branson, MO, 9/12-16, Harold Liming, (574) 753-3453, dukemar2@wmconnect.com; **Cbt Infantrymen Assn**, Tucson, AZ, Oct, Larry Eckard, (828) 256-6008, cw3reteck@aol.com

Fort Richardson, Cincinnati, 9/12-16, Arlene Franchuk, (701) 282-4276, eajames49@msn.com; **G Co 119th Inf 30th Div**, Sioux City, IA, 9/15-17, Jack Mace, (770) 590-7945; **Gen HQ 1st Raider Co/X Corp Spec Ops Co**, Eugene, OR, 8/17-19, J.E. Ballow, (271) 546-7168, bballow@motion.net; **Mine Planter Svc (Sub)**, Ashtabula, OH, 10/15, Martin Dwyer, (570) 341-8734, martyk9@webtv.net; **SHAFF/ETOUSA Vets Assn (Europe, WWII)**, West Point, NY, 10/3-5, Charles Long, (703) 729-1406, chasveralong@att.net

COAST GUARD

Callaway APA 35, Branson, MO, 9/19-23, Wallace Shipp, (202) 363-3663; **Chase APA 26**, Boston, 8/31-9/3, Jay York, (317) 849-1283, ymudcreek@aol.com

JOINT

Mount McKinley AGC/LCC 7, Charleston, SC, 9/7-11, Patrick Tracy, (989) 687-6288, paddytom1@aol.com; **Salem CA 139**, Washington, 7/7-10, Bob Daniels, (352) 315-1397; **Wilkes-Barre CL 103**, Philadelphia, 9/11-15, Bonnie Freer, (630) 579-8259, ripleyroorah@wideopenwest.com

MARINES

3/5 (Korea), Omaha, NE, 9/13-17, Al Bettiga, (520) 229-0657, albett@earthlink.net; **7th Field Depot 7th Svc Rgt**, Albuquerque, NM, 9/17-21, Art Manwaring, (708) 672-5811, artmanw@juno.com; **Anti-Tank Co 5th Mar (Korea)**, St. Louis, 9/15-17, Chuck Batherson, (231) 839-5476, chuckandbarbat5@voyager.net; **Camp Lejeune HS All Class Reunion (1945-2004)**, Camp Lejeune, NC, 7/1-3, Lisa Beavers, (910) 451-2451, lhs_contact@am.dodea.edu; **Charlie Co 1st Bn 5th Mar**, Charleston, SC, 10/25-27, Robert Smith, (423) 235-6464, smithfirm@att.net; **Easy Co 2-5 1st Mar Div (Korea, 1950-1953)**, Las Vegas, 10/3-6, Dave Shaw, (928) 468-1864, deshaw@cybertrails.net; **Force Log Cmd/Force Log Support Grp All Sub-Units**, Biloxi, MS, 9/15-18, Michael Dunn, (812) 256-2249, kikieusmc@hotmail.com; **Fox Co 2nd Bn 7th Rgt 1st Mar Div (Korea, 1950-1953)**, Branson, MO, 10/12-16, Bill French, (417)

739-5541; **G-3-1 (Korea)**, Las Vegas, 9/19-23, Tom Enos, (702) 420-0006, tndenos@laughlin.net; **H-3-1 (Korea)**, Denver, 9/21-25, Jack Dedrick, (978) 535-5451, jdedrick@aol.com; **Mar Barracks 8th & I Assn**, Arlington, VA, 8/1-7, Steve Holton, (301) 283-6834; **Mar Barracks (Bermuda)**, Branson, MO, 10/6-9, Dennis "Mac" McDonald, (763) 473-3458; **MCCCIA**, Orlando, FL, 9/13-18, Jim Peringer, (386) 767-2593, hosts2005@mcclia.org; **Tri-State Mar Det 494 Mar Corps League**, Youngstown, OH, Frank Griffiths, (330) 533-2314; **VMA-223 (1961-1964)**, San Antonio, 9/15-18, Len Linkes, (210) 494-5828, llinkes@cv1.net; **VMF(N)-541 "Bateye" Sqdn**, Washington, 9/29-10/2, John Devine, (570) 875-0898

NAVY

11th Special Seabees (WWII), Albany, NY, 9/11-14, James D'Amore, (609) 259-0631, james.damore@att.net; **17th, 53rd & 120th Seabees (WWII)**, Reno, NV, 9/26-29, William Merrill, (219) 762-2048; **28th Special Seabees (WWII)**, Branson, MO, 9/8-11, Edward Olson, (413) 772-3708; **60th Seabees (WWII)**, Little Rock, AR, 9/9-10, Don Jones, (501) 455-8371; **63rd Seabee Assn**, Springfield, IL, 9/15-19, Robert Connelly, (217) 774-2049; **93rd Seabees (WWII)**, Pigeon Forge, TN, 9/19-22, Lil Roberti, (865) 584-0393, lar1927@bellsouth.net; **114th Seabee Bn (WWII)**, Albany, NY, 10/22-26, Tom Pandick, (518) 434-2467, fitchstr@aol.com; **A-3 Skywarrior Assn**, Corpus Christi, TX, 11/3-6, Tom Maxwell, (660) 882-8073, tmaxwell3@sbcglobal.net; **Air Grp 47**, Duluth, MN, 10/13-16, Bob Talbot, (715) 822-8150, talbot@chibardun.net; **ACORN 52 (1944-1946)**, Little Rock, AR, 10/3-7, Ralph Snyder, (217) 698-9122

Alhena AK 26/AKA 9, Corpus Christi, TX, 10/5-9, Clyde Meyers, (225) 664-4786, clydemeyers@yahoo.com; **Arkansas BB 33**, Baton Rouge, LA, 9/25-10/2, Darrell Baker, (740) 548-6200, danksastravler@aol.com; **Arthur Middleton APA 25**, Tacoma, WA, 9/21-24, Lloyd DeBoer, (360) 352-2193; **Bairoko CVE 115**, Myrtle Beach, SC, 10/12-15, Tom Marck, (513) 553-3586; **Belleau Wood CVL 24**, Washington, 9/14-18, Dick Fread, (727) 848-5409; **Biscayne AVP 11/AGC 18**, Charleston, SC, 10/9-13, E.J. Collins, (706) 541-1196, srcollinz@aol.com; **Bogue CVE 9**, Jacksonville, FL, 10/13-17, Robert Kruger, (919) 787-5018, bdkruger@aol.com; **Boise CL 47**, San Antonio, 9/21-24, Melvin Howard, (215) 673-7086; **Bridge AF 1**, Des Moines, IA, 9/20-22, Oliver Nash, (325) 677-0207, onash@cox.net; **CASU F20**, Portland, OR, 9/14-17, Lloyd Norene, (503) 283-2713, jnorene@cpurity.com; **Catamount LSD 17 (1945-1970)**, Reno, NV, 9/25-29, Don Steinbach, 911 S. 122nd St.

West Allis, WI 53214, konawi@earthlink.net; **Cebu ARG 6**, Naples, FL, 9/26-29, Wayne Hansen, (508) 376-5543, onebjh@aol.com; **Charles Carroll APA 28 (WWII)**, Washington, 9/15-18, Mildred Smith, (972) 385-0525, mildredsmith972@sbcglobal.net; **Collingsworth APA 146 (WWII)**, Nashville, TN, 9/28-10/2, Mark Schaitel, (608) 269-7266; **Conway DD/DDE 507**, Bozeman, MT, 9/7-10, W.H. Williams, (406) 586-5748, m2williams@earthlink.net; **Corry DD/DDR 817**, Cape May, NJ, 11/3-6, Jim Shaffit, (330) 544-3301, jimbo817@sbcglobal.net; **Dade APA 99**, Norfolk, VA, 9/8-11, Bill Cates, (513) 522-3238, setac@fuse.net; **DeLong DE 684**, Mobile, AL, 10/20-22, Richard Barker, (812) 257-1907, rdbpbj@charter.net; **Dest Sqdn 25 (WWII) "Tin Cans" - Dashiell DD 659, Harrison DD 573, McKee DD 575, Murray DD 576, Ringgold DD 500, Rodgers DD 574, Schroeder DD 50, Sigsbee DD 502, Stevens DD 479**, Louisville, KY 7/26-28, John Chiquoine, (610) 692-2627, dd53@aol.com; **Detroit CL 8**, Lisle, IL, 9/8-11, George Hogrew, (630) 323-4589; **Frontier AD 25**, Corpus Christi, TX, Fall, Robert Smith, (732) 251-1773, ussfrontierad25@yahoo.com; **Gambier Bay VC 10**, Crystal City, VA, 9/7-11, Jack Turner, (303) 756-4189, jack2att.net; **Gandy DE 764 (WWII)**, Albany, NY, 9/11-15, Tom Lucas, (662) 489-4746, lukegandy764@aol.com; **Garrard APA 84**,

Herndon, VA, 9/22-25, Lavern Wimer, (402) 765-7206, lwwimer@mymailstation.com; **Goodhue APA 107 (WWII)**, Cape Cod, MA, F.J. "Red" Nagle, (508) 888-5764; **Great Sitkin AE 17**, Charleston, SC, 8/17-21, Doug Hauser, (334) 277-2151, hauserae17@charter.net; **Gunason DE 795**, Milwaukie, 9/6-10, Aubrey Briggs, (847) 623-8936, abbiggs@pngusa.net; **Hale DD 642**, St. Louis, 9/14-17, Jon Marshall, (708) 403-4908; **Hamner DD 716**, San Antonio, 10/3-6, Jim Tighe, (716) 649-5997; **Henry B. Wilson DDG 7**, Linthicum, MD, Dan Marks, (217) 287-2143, demark@directway.com; **Higbee DD/DDR 806**, Boston, 9/14-18, Gil Rodello, (541) 747-1408, gilrodhigbee@comcast.net; **Hilary P. Jones DD 427**, Albany, NY, 9/26-29, Al Malcolmson, (518) 449-2095, pdundon@nycap.rr.com; **Hinsdale APA 120**, Flagstaff, AZ, 9/25-28, Jack Winbourn, (970) 565-3922; **Hocking APA 121 (WWII)**, Knoxville, TN, 9/22-26, Charlie Stockfish, (865) 977-0848, stockfis@bellsouth.net

Holland AS 3/ARG 18, Clearwater Beach, FL, 10/26-29, Jim McCarthy, (733) 779-4782, jimspecs@aol.com; **Hollister DD 788**, Colorado Springs, CO, 9/14-18, Nelda Rupp, (503) 656-4949, hnrupp@hevanet.com; **Honolulu CL 48/SSN 718**, Washington, 10/13-17, Ralph Tannenbaum, (801) 233-0434, tanral@comcast.net; **Huse DE 145**, Savannah, GA, 10/16-20, David Perlstein, (561) 368-7167, dbp14@hotmail.com; **Hutchins DD 476**, Wildwood Crest, NJ, 9/26-30, George Mattade, (609) 886-3952; **Intl Chief Petty Officer Assn**, Orlando, FL, 9/7-12, Patrick Ahern, (702) 471-7430, icpoa@cox.net; **James C. Owens DD 776**, Sacramento, CA, 10/5-8, W. Keith Nelson, (719) 635-7667, w.nelson@att.net; **James E. Kyes DD 787**, Minneapolis, 9/15-17, Javier Patron, (210) 521-2336; **James O'Hara APA 90**, Pigeon Forge, TN, 10/11, Arthur Beasley, (804) 526-1203; **John Rodgers DD 574**, Lexington, KY, 10/2-9, Jack Mindock, (815) 883-8443; **John W. Weeks**, San Antonio, 9/28-10/2, Len

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Budzynski, (419) 215-5009, lenski@buckeye-express.com; **Johnnie Hutchins DE 360**, Cape Cod, MA, 9/12-16, Bruce Tarvers, (508) 487-9649, btarvers@comcast.net; **Juneau Assn**, Seattle, 9/7-11, Ed Cox, (843) 537-5848, edwinc@bellsouth.net; **Keith DE 241**, Peters, MO, 9/13-14, Omar Jackson, (636) 327-6655; **Kenton APA 122**, Alexandria, VA, 8/25-28, Harrison Stroud, (805) 653-5117, harrison_stroud@hotmail.com; **Klondike AD/AR 22 & Subgrp 1 Pacific Reserve Ft San Diego Grp**, Arlington, VA, 9/16-19, John Cretal, (925) 516-7044, jcretal@cwo.com; **Koiner DE/DER 331**, Galveston Island, TX, 9/26-29, Mac Christy, (785) 255-4368, machief@directway.com; **Lake Champlain CV/CVA/CVS 39 (All Years)**, Jacksonville, FL, 11/3-6, Eugene Carroll, (607) 532-4735, gcarroll@rochester.rr.com; **Latimer APA 152**, Charleston, SC, 10/13-15, Jane Blair, (352) 489-9838, apa152@aol.com

Long Beach CGN 9, Burlingame, CA, Don Shade, (866) 352-2469, lbccn9@aol.com; **Lowndes**, Chicago, 9/15-18, Bud Kautz, (815) 344-6326, redlabelbuddha@aol.com; **LSMR 188, 189 (1944-1946)**, Charleston, SC, 9/15-18, Paul Ray, (423) 282-8531, raylsmr@juno.com; **LST 347 & 72**, Portland, OR, 9/7-11, Dale Nelson, (940) 692-5946, dannedj@aol.com; **Marvin H. McIntyre APA 129 (WWII)**, Springfield, IL, 10/11-12, John Van Etten, (702) 839-1276; **Mattaponi AO 41**, Omaha, NE, 9/8-10, John Lofshult, (712) 428-6262; **Minneapolis CA 36 All Personnel (1934-1946)**, Colorado Springs, CO, 9/6-10, Glenn A. Stephens, (970) 226-0714, ca36@secy.comcast.net; **Mississippi CGN 40**, Virginia Beach, VA, 7/14-17, Jay Martin, (717) 665-5871, jim1176@aol.com; **Mississippi EAG 128**, Tucson, AZ, 11/3-6, Jake Jacobs, (805) 384-9153, jakeann@juno.com; **Mount Olympus AGC 8**, Louisville, KY, 10/5-8, J. McGrath, (386) 788-6451

NAS/NOB Trinidad (FASRON 105, VPB-213, VPB-208, VPMS-8, VP-48, VP-34 & Mar Det), Port Canaveral, FL/Bahamas Cruise, 10/17-21, F.D. Barrett, (800) 496-2285, barrett@ozarkisp.net; **Nat'l Assn of USS LCS (L) 1-130**, Washington, 10/5-10, John Rooney, (610) 935-0902, dahdit82@aol.com; **New Jersey BB 62**, Valley Forge, PA, 9/28-10/2, Ed Campbell, (707) 428-5417, edcampbell@prodigy.net; **"Nine Sisters" WWII CVLs**, Cruise, 12/10-18, Richard Fread, (800) 882-3412, rfread@microd.com; **Ogden LPD 5**, Branson, MO, 9/15-18, Joe MacFarlane, (781) 331-5511, btmacf@aol.com; **Otter DE 210**, Hyannis, MA, 9/6, Bob Spannbauer, (253) 874-5871, bobbevspann@aol.com; **Paul G. Baker DE 642**, Albany, NY, 9/28-30, George E. Martel, (413) 568-9048; **PC 1120**, Grand Junction, CO, 9/21-25, John Frick, (970) 242-8029; Pine Island AV 12, Charleston, SC, 10/6-8, Bob Buscher, (785) 582-4460

Point Defiance LSD 31, Las Vegas, 9/28-10/1, John Nicolosi, (978) 283-9024, johnick@webtv.net; **Pollux AKS 2/AKS 4**, St. Louis, 9/14-18, Glen Broxson, (850) 994-0416, glenbroxson@aol.com; **Princeton CVL 23 Assn**, Elkridge, MD, 10/5-9, Al Zelent, (847) 816-3757, azelent@sbcglobal.net; **Pursuit AGS 17/AM 108**, Nashville, TN, 9/22-24, Arlie Wooters, (302) 875-8095; **Quapaw ATF 110**, Springfield, IL, 10/13-17, Kenneth Kuhn, (217) 446-8440, kenkuhn2218@yahoo.com; **Quincy CA 71 (WWII)**, Myrtle Beach, SC, 9/22-25, Al Levesque, (401) 728-3063, quincyca71@echoes.net; **Quincy CA 71 (WWII & Korea)**, Pittsburgh, 10/6-9, Richard Larkin, (412) 766-5458; **Randall APA 224**, Washington, 9/8-10, Duane Clausen, (402) 359-2360, dflyer@cox.net; **Ranger CVA/CV 61 All Hands**, Sept, Cruise, Teddy Pathroff, (570) 669-9435; **Robert H. McCard DD 822**, Washington, 9/29-10/2, Wendell McElwee, (513) 528-2067, wjmcc2@juno.com; **Robert L. Wilson DD/DDE 847**, Washington, 9/9-15, Frank Esposito, (808) 625-9497, fesp071585@aol.com; **Sabine AO 25**, San Antonio, 9/12-16, John Clancy, (513) 731-5463, johnnyclancy@yahoo.com; **Sarsfield DD/EDD 837**, Branson, MO, 10/5-8, Emery Spirko, (732) 254-5895, theretiredman@comcast.net; **Sepulga AO 20**, St. Louis, 9/7-9, George

Vollmer, (614) 263-0838, georgelv@aol.com; **Steamer Bay CVE 87/VC 90/VC 93**, Albuquerque, NM, 9/14-19, Clifford Brito, (505) 869-5743; **Stockham DD 683**, Independence, MO, 9/27-30, Charles Warner, (660) 564-3543; **Swasey DE 248**, Biloxi, MS, 9/13-15, Ted Sluzas, (772) 567-1289; **Theodore E. Chandler**, Cocoa Beach, FL, 10/6-8, James Crouch, (505) 748-3909, plumber@pvt.net; **Tingey DD 539**, Branson, MO, 10/6-9, Clarence Daniels, (641) 452-6008, joydan@lisco.com; **Tolovana AO 64 All Years**, Dayton, OH, 9/8-10, Jim Dull, (419) 965-2091, jbdull@verizon.net; **Tortuga Assn LSD 26/46**, Washington, 9/14-18, Jack Hammond, (425) 487-1591, smokearrow@aol.com; **Tutuila ARG 4**, Baltimore, 9/1-3, Ted Schneider, (504) 348-2046; **Twin Cities NAS**, Minneapolis, 8/27, Jack Iverson, (952) 322-1249, thetarjei@charter.net; **USN Public Affairs Alumni Assn**, Newport, RI, 10/9-10, George Vercessi, (703) 751-3337, vercessi.george@verizon.net

Vincennes CA 44/CL 64/CG 49, Vincennes, IN, 8/8-11, Antonio "Tony" Barbaro, (585) 294-3246; **VS-931 Antisub Sqdn**, Vancouver, WA, 9/29-10/2, J. Robert Wagner, (610) 277-4374, bobwagner@msn.com; **Wake Island CVE 65**, Branson, MO, 9/15-17, Ron Paul, (253) 759-9833; **Waller DD/DDE 466**, Kansas City, MO, 8/31-9/4, W. Max Lucas, (785) 842-1758, mlucas@sunflower.com; **West Point AP 23 Reunion Assn**, Arlington, VA, 10/5-8, Ken Johnson, (906) 428-3105, kennhelen315@aol.com; **Whiteside AKA 90**, Louisville, KY, 9/15-18, H. Dean Wall, (828) 724-4296, alstede@charter.net; **Wilhoite DE/DER 397**, Philadelphia, 8/24-27, Frank Roche, (570) 287-3992, froche@citizensvoice.com; **William M. Wood DD/DDR 715**, Oakbrook Terrace, IL, 10/6-10, Stan Przybycz, (708) 479-9599; **Worcester CL 144 All Personnel**, Niagara Falls, NY, 9/16-19, Phil Harter, (845) 255-2603

COMRADES IN DISTRESS

12th Sec Police Sqdn, Randolph AFB, TX (Jan-Aug 1984). David Bohmfalk seeks witnesses to confirm he suffered leg pain, large varicose veins and edema in his calves. CID 1471
1st Inf Div 121st Sig Bn A Co, Laike, Vietnam (Apr-Aug 1968). James Adams Jr. seeks witnesses to confirm he suffers PTSD. CID 1472
NAS Lemore, CA (Apr-Aug 1968). Russell Poland seeks witnesses to confirm he suffered seizures after sustaining a head injury in an auto accident. CID 1473
Fort Devens, MA (Apr-May 1955). Ronald Suesserman seeks witnesses to confirm injuries sustained when he was struck by a Jeep while directing convoy traffic in Georgia. CID 1474

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Post 10, FL: Larry McDaniel, William A. Peters, Peter Pohuski, Harry T. Rooney, James M. Stidham, Jon Yeitirski
Post 312, IL: Michael Altpeter, Robert Beck, William Busby, Stan Cady, Bob Geisen, Virgil Grzywa, Glen Kahl, Edward Neisendorf, Richard Pearson, Francis Reynolds, Charles Sauber, Charles Stowe, Edward Strobel, Thomas Strobel, John Vida
Post 57, IN: F. Harold Furr
Post 255, MD: Robert Bradburn, F. Leonard Harding, John Matthews, Joseph McKay, Ralph Mesick, James Norris, James Pratt, Joseph Ridgell, James Yeatman, Robert Young
Post 45, ME: Gilbert W. Spinney
Post 29, MI: Albert G. Krieger
Post 59, NJ: Arthur J. Grant
Post 157, NJ: John Burke, Robert Burns, Roger Deacon, John Lawson, Daniel McCole, Neil Pascoe, Charles Taylor, Peter Varsalona, Alan M. Wood
Post 370, NJ: Thomas J. Gallagher
Post 414, NJ: Albert Frascella, James Grubb, William Purcell, Robert Scheurman
Post 450, NJ: Don Collins, John Destefano, John Gildawie, James W. Henderson, Ken Linzey, John Mihalcsko, Edward J. Mines, Everitt Parks, Joe Quigley, Leroy Roberts, Robert

Shalongo, Leonard Smith, Charles Valkenburg
Post 149, NY: C. Robert Parsons
Post 124, OH: Sarge DC C. Branford, Ben Donato, Joseph Mallone, Robert Marhefka, Donald E. Neary, Emil Zappitelli
Post 553, OH: Richard J. Cherry
Post 615, OH: Robert Anderle, Kenneth W. Bradley, Garry L. Dakin, James W. Dakin, Jerry Dakin, Douglas C. Furnus, Milton Harvey, Donald G. Hoagland, Robert L. Kerr, Richard D. Merris, Richard L. Ratliff, Donald L. Rye, Richard D. Sheehan, Warren D. Tinney, Paul D. Trimble, Gary Van Nuys
Post 656, OH: Evans Blakeley, James Lancaster, Albert F. Quinn
Post 183, TN: Claude H. Garland, Ben J. Horton, Maness Starling
Post 31, VA: Harry K. Butts, Willie L. Edwards Sr., E. Stanley Trimble Sr.
Post 149, WV: James D. McGraw

IN SEARCH OF

1st Admin Co 1st Inf Div (Di An, Vietnam, 1965-1966), Jim AuBuchon, (620) 231-9144, aubie@cox.net
1st Avn Bde/AVDAC (Long Binh, Vietnam, 1969-1971), Larry Lawrence, (318) 865-6056, larryl04@bellsouth.net
1st Guided Msl Bde (White Sands Proving Ground, 1953-1955), Johnny Hurst, (830) 899-3147, furrh@hotmail.com
1st Inf Div 7th FA Bn A Btry (Schwalback, Germany, 1948-1952), Lawrence Lamb, (804) 435-6352
2nd Armored Div 48th Med (Fort Hood, TX, 1959-1961), Gerard Leegwater, (952) 890-2645, theleegs@gbrownline.com
2nd Bn 6th Mar (Camp Lejeune, NC, 1964-1966), Ronald Quarto, (410) 721-2052, ronquart@aol.com
3rd Avn Bn 3rd Inf Div (Kitzingen, Germany, 1960-1966), Bill Jimerson, (719) 598-7036
3rd Howitzer Bn 18th Arty (Darmstadt, Germany, Ernst Ludwig Kaserne, 1960-1963), George Hanselman, (815) 433-0927, g.hans@juno.com
5th Arty Div "Red Diamond" (Augsburg, Germany, 1954-1956), Ned Marsch, (570) 742-3897
7th Inf Div Air Sects (1950-1952), John King, (425) 432-0631, johngking.1@juno.com
7th Med Bn (Korea, 1946-1947), Don Johnson, (480) 396-3681, donlaviere@mymailstation.com
8th & I Mar, John Reim, (856) 694-0850, jreim@aol.com
8th Inf Div 5th Inf Rgt H Co (Carson, CO & Pinder B arracks, Nuremberg, Germany, 1956-1958), Wilson Hoffman, (610) 845-2443
10th Spec Svc Unit (Manila, Philippines, 1946-1947), Remie Henry, (337) 334-7200
11th Ord Co DAS (Fort Devens, MA, 1955-1950), Lonas Kralik, (951) 679-3911, mlonas@verizon.net
14th Ord MM Co (Fort Devens, MA & Kitzingen, Germany, 1948-1954), Donald Mowry, (260) 484-3488, donmowry@comcast.net
15th MP Bde 709th MP Bn (Germany, 1965-1976), Curt Cree, (715) 458-4571, cc709thmp@hotmail.com
24th Inf Div 13th FA Bn (Korea, 1950-1952), Phillip Weaver, 4025 N. 245 E., LaGrange, IN 46761, darkhorseweaver@hotmail.com
25th MP Co 25th Inf Div "Tropical Lightning" (1941-Present), Dick Burch, gabgm@bellsouth.net
42nd Eng Const Bn (Korea, 1946-1948), Bill Troesch, (937) 642-3741
44th Recon Sqdn 11th Cav Grp XIII Corps 9th Army (Europe, WWII), Jim Ingram, (308) 425-3010, jimill@gtmac.net
51st TCS (Italy, 1944-1945), Ralph TerBush, (845) 565-5008
59th Med Grp (Burtonwood, England), Bill Weyman, (314) 434-8144, bufbil@sbcglobal.net
61st Eng Const Bn (Camp Desert Rock, NV, 1953), George DeSalvo, (727) 862-6849, pal-doke@msn.com
61st Med Bn (Europe, WWII), George Moran, (413) 664-6116
61st Tank Bn 9th Inf Div (Leipheim, Germany, 1954-1958), Bill Parker, (270) 351-9536, parkerb@bbtel.com

64th Ord Bn (1954-1955), Robert Boettcher, (406) 378-3243, boetttrae@ttc-cmc.net
65th MP (Heidelberg, Germany, 1967-1969), Larry Kahle, (570) 547-0588
81st FA 2nd Missile Bn & 158th Ord Co (Ansbach & Erlangen, Germany, 1958-1964), G.R. Rutt, (386) 575-2384, ruttg@bellsouth.net
92nd Arty (Badkissingen, Germany, 1958-1959), Curtis Bratlie, (701) 352-3397, dbratlie@polarcomm.com
136th Inf (Philippines, 1944-1947), Warren Melvin, (517) 552-9560, podunkposey1@aol.com
221st Sig Co (Fort Monmouth, NJ & Long Bien, Vietnam, 1967-1969), Roger Exposito, (610) 419-6066, phoenixdir@yahoo.com
226th Sig Svc Co (Taegu, Korea, 1951-1952), Len "Trav" Travnicek, (480) 634-6690
285th MP Co (Germany), Richard Burch, gabgm@bellsouth.net
336th Ord Bn (Da Nang, Vietnam, Sept 1968-Aug 1979), Sam High, (501) 676-5951, sdhigh@aristotle.net
385th MP Bn A, B, C Cos (Wilkins Barracks, Kornwestheim, Germany, 1945-1977), Richard Burch, gabgm@bellsouth.net
385th MP Det Honor Guard 7th Army HQ Patch Barracks (Stuttgart-Vahighen, Germany, Nov 1961-March 1963), Mike Pace, 381 Peterson Road, Wichita Falls, TX 76305, pace_mike@hotmail.com
285th MP Co (Germany), Richard Burch, gabgm@bellsouth.net
504th MP Bn (1941-2005), Richard Burch, gabgm@bellsouth.net
508th MP Co A, B, C, D Cos (1944-1964), Richard Burch, gabgm@bellsouth.net
514th MP Horse Plt 709th MP Bn (Palm Gardens, Frankfurt, Germany, 1946-1948), Richard Burch, gabgm@bellsouth.net
524th MP Co (Corps, Okinawa & Fort Shafter, HI, 1950-1977), Richard Burch, gabgm@bellsouth.net
525th Ord Co (Siegelbach, Germany, 1965-1967), Raymond Ides, (217) 352-1917, ettubruete@net66.com
527th MP PG (Mannheim, Germany, 1954-1957), Richard Newberry, 163 Eagle Glen Drive, Woodstock, GA 30189, msgnewberry@wmconnect.com
552nd Arty Grp (Soegel, Germany, 1964-1966), Michael Thomson, (702) 873-5535, michael4445@earthlink.com
585th AF Band (Carswell AFB, Fort Worth, TX, 1949-1952), Harvey Nix, (209) 727-3917
663rd Trans Co (West Point, NY, 1953), G.W. Battyanyi, (732) 828-1719, snowdonia@rcn.com
709th MP Co A, B, C, D Cos (1942-1947), Richard Burch, gabgm@bellsouth.net
759th MP Bn (Berlin, Germany, 1946-1948), Ray Belaire, (906) 779-0797
785th AC&W Sqdn (Finley, ND, 1950-1980), James Bradburn, (734) 663-3803, jkbradb@yahoo.com
876th AC&W Sqdn (Alcoy Air Stn, Spain), Philip Waller, (863) 291-5129, phillybaby39@aol.com
887th FA Bn (Fort McCoy, WI, Schwabish Hall, Germany, 1950-1963), Milton Schreiner, (920) 734-8805, tvsinc@compuserve.com
928th Eng Avn Gp HQ (1947-1958), Larry Tieri, (708) 246-1718, ltieri@aol.com
979th Eng Maint Co (Camp Breckinridge, KY, 1943-1946), Martin Dorfman, (561) 533-0008
2004th AACs Sqdn BW-8 (Greenland, 1952), Lynwood Davis, (337) 238-2966
3023rd QM Bakery Co Mobile Spec (Europe, WWII), William Johnston, (712) 523-2723, wejamj79@mchsi.com
3704th AAF Sqdn T (Keesler Field, MS, 1946), John Hutchison, johnhutchison@webtv.net
4108th AAFBU (Newark, NJ, 1943-1945), Medell Ford, (301) 899-2506
4640th Support Sqdn (Dorton, AFB, CA, 1960-1961), Leo Flanagan, (810) 359-5715, nfa57@cs.com
7405th Support Sqdn (Wiesbaden, Germany, 1961-1964), Ron Lapman, (781) 871-0791
A Co 1st MT Bn 1st Mar Div (Vietnam, Aug 1965-Aug 1966), Tom Mallonee, (509) 586-1243, aphiemi@msn.com
A, B, C & HQ Trps 2nd Recon Sqdn 7th Cav "Bamberg Garryowens" (Bamberg, Germany), Joe Quелlette, (314) 965-2990, sales@omsinc.net

Action USCG (1943-1946), Roy H. Tincher, (828) 683-1111
Alaskan Air Cmd U2 Opns (1958-1960), William Brown, (316) 522-5939
Amori Mil Gov Team (Amori, Japan, 1946-1948), Robert Pollock, (603) 487-2862, nhsporran@aol.com
Annapolis AGMR 1 (Vietnam, 1965-1967), Richard Hunnicutt, r.hunnicutt@msn.com
B Co 14th/56th Supply & Svc (Baumholder, Germany), 1968-1970, Glenn Miller, gmillersr1947@aol.com
Blandy DD 943 (1977-1978), Earl Gandy, (856) 451-5411
Bronx APA 236, Ralph Barlow, (916) 363-7574, 10960barlow@sbcglobal.net
Buffalo, NY, State College Grads Armed Serv Reunion, Kate Ward, (800) 672-2700, wardka@buffalostate.edu
Burtonwood AFB (Warrington, England, 1942-1993), Richard Iwanowski, (773) 767-1810
C Btry 663rd FA (Korea, 1957-1958), Edward Givens, (318) 723-4606, kwgives@aol.com
Camp Cooke Army Post, CA, Football Team (1952), Richard Herwig, 320 Burr Oak Drive, Albert Lea, MN 56007, ritadick@clear.lakes.com
Capodanno FF 1093 (1981), Earl Gandy, (856) 451-5411
Co 133 NTC San Diego (1947), Harold Allen, (850) 983-8296, allen_h@bellsouth.net
Co 134 NTC (March-May 1946), Raymond Chesney, (601) 774-8013
Co 4526 NTS Bainbridge (1943-1944), Ernest Rose, 755 Garden Lake Drive, Garden City, SC, 29576
Great Sitkin AE 17 (1945-1973), Doug Hauser, (334) 277-2151, hauserae17@charter.net
Guam Hosp (1959-1960), Robert Murphy, (978) 790-7367
H & HQ Det 8th Log Cmd Post Sig (Livorno, Italy, 1965-1966), Tony Bassano, (408) 295-1634, abassano41@netzero.net
H & S Co 61st Eng Const Bn (Camp Polk, LA & Fort Hood, TX), 1952-1953, George DeSalvo, (727) 862-6849, pal-doke@msn.com
HQ & A Co 122nd Maint Bn 3rd Armd Div (Feigerhorst Kasern, Germany), Paul Griffin, (662) 628-6187, slimgriff@tds.net
HQ Det 317th Trp Carrier Grp (Tachikawa, Japan, 1946-1947), Herbert Wagener, (724) 627-9707, hwagener@aol.net
John Young DD 973 (1978-1981), Earl Gandy, (856) 451-5411
Koiner DER 331 (1962-1964), Larry "Jake" Jacobsmeier, (801) 725-1627
L Trp 3rd Plt 3rd Sqdn 3rd Armd Cav Rgt (Kaiserslautern, Germany, 1962-1965), Clem Petrick, (701) 786-4003
Lorain County LST 1177, David Clark, (304) 754-7569, 12dallen@adelphia.net
LSMR 188, 189 (1944-1946), Paul Ray, (423) 282-8531, raylsmr@juno.com
LST 517 (WWII, 1945), Albert "Dick" Inhoff, (712) 736-5136
Motor Pool P.W. Camp HQ Det Prisoner SCU 1880 (Camp Polk, LA, 1944-1946), W.E. Trainer, 1064 Pine St., Conyers, GA 30012
MSG Frankfurt U.S. Consulate (West Germany, 1966-1968), Ronald Quarto, (410) 721-2052, ronquart@aol.com
Northpoint, Buzz Germany (Kregsfeld, 1953-1991), Buzz Nelson, (218) 681-4760, buzzard_n@hotmail.com
Ord Ammo Cos (WWII), Wendell Stewart, (301) 834-6561
Plt 161 1st RTB C Co (Parris Island, SC, Aug-Nov 1963), Ronald Quarto, (410) 721-2052, ronquart@aol.com
Plt 467 (Parris Island, SC, 1954-1955), Tom Hudson, (251) 639-0320, tmhu@bellsouth.net
Saratoga CVA 60 V3 Div (1963-1965), Jimmy Anselmo, (504) 888-3849, janselmo@bellsouth.net
Sway AM 120, Gene Bruscatto, (860) 376-6276
Threadfin SS 410 (Key West, FL, 1956-1960), Bill James, (719) 685-1647, bill@eaglemotel.com
USAFSS 1st Russian Language Class (Mitchell Field, Long Island, NY, 1960-1961), Richard Wilson, (906) 225-1689, dkwilson@charter.net
USN Flt Weather Facility (Keflavik, Iceland, 1961-1963), Larry Crozier, (828) 683-6972, ldcro1@aol.com

YMS 349 (Sept 1943-Dec 1945), Dan Hester, (740) 654-4939
YTL 552 (Okinawa, 1945), John Brown, 102 Hanover St., Nanticoke, PA 18634

TAPS

Edward J. Kelly, Dept. of New York. Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 2004-2005.
Robert E. Lyngh, Dept. of Colorado. Assistant Nat'l Adjutant 1956-1967 and Nat'l Staff Veterans Affairs & Rehab. Director 1977-1987.
Edwin Malloy Jr., Dept. of South Carolina. Nat'l Counter-Subversive Activ. Cmte. Memb. 1967-1968, Nat'l Mbrshp. & Post Activ. Cmte. Memb. 1968-1973, Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Memb. 1969-1972, Dept. Cmdr. 1976-1977, Nat'l Legis. Cncl. Memb. 1979-1980, Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1979-1988 and Nat'l Mil. Affairs Cmte. Memb. 1988-2003.
Bernard J. Peron, Depts. of Hawaii and Texas. Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Memb. 1969-1970, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1975-1977, Nat'l Internal Affairs Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1975-1976 and Nat'l Conv. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1976-1977.
Edward A. Schalk, Dept. of Illinois. Nat'l Mbrshp. & Post Activ. Cmte. Memb. 1964-1965, 1966-1967 and 1972-1978, Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1967-1968, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Memb. 1967-1968, Dept. Cmdr. 1971-1972 and Nat'l Mbrshp. & Post Activ. Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1973-1976.
Wilbur L. Van Sant Jr., Dept. of Maryland. Nat'l Mbrshp. & Post Activ. Cmte. Memb. 1959-1961, Nat'l Veterans Preference Cmte. Memb. 1961-1962, Dept. Cmdr. 1964-1965, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1966-1967 and 1969-1970, Nat'l Housing Cmte. Memb. 1967-1968 and Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Memb. 1968-1969.

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A COLLEGE PROFESSOR who was an avowed atheist shocked students when he flatly stated that there is no God, the expression "one nation under God" is unconstitutional and, further, he would prove there is no God. Addressing the ceiling, he shouted, "God, if you are real, then I want you to knock me off this platform. I'll give you 15 minutes!" The lecture room fell silent.

Ten minutes went by. Again the professor taunted God, saying, "Here I am, God. I'm still waiting."

Two minutes remained when a Marine, just released from active duty and newly registered in the class, walked up to the professor and hit him full force in the face. The professor fell from his lofty platform, knocked cold. Without a word, the young Marine took a seat in the front row. No one spoke.

Eventually, the professor came to, shaken. He looked at the Marine and finally yelled, "What's the matter with you? Why did you do that?"

"God was busy. He sent me."

"I KNOW why Superman left Krypton. Earth was the only place he could get steroids."

—Milton Berle

AN AGED FARMER and his wife were leaning against their pigpen when the old woman wistfully recalled that the next week would mark their golden wedding anniversary.

"Let's have a party, Homer," she suggested. "Let's kill a pig."

The farmer scratched his head. "Gee, Ethel," he finally answered. "I don't see why the pig should take the blame for something that happened 50 years ago."



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"While you're here, you wanna cut the grass?"



"I just want to live long enough to be a burden to my children."

AN ELDERLY gentleman walks into an upscale cocktail lounge. Seated at the bar is an elderly woman. The gentleman sits down beside her, orders a drink, turns to her and says, "Do I come here often?"

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